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The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

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From the PRESIDENT

Hope Springs Eternal

Jennie Love

There's a nagging voice in my head as I type this that keeps psyching me out: "You've got really big shoes to fill. Can you do it?!" Dave has been a knowledgeable, giving, thoughtful, and steady leader of the ASCFG for so many years through so many roles. Time to hike up my big girl pants and see if I can do half the job he did! I'm incredibly grateful and more than a bit humbled to have this opportunity to lead an organization that has been so influential in my own journey as a flower farmer.

Now what to do with your undivided attention? The power is real, folks!

While working on some wintry clean-up tasks at the farm the other day, I heard a short segment on NPR's Here & Now about "climate anxiety", a newly coined term by mental health professionals, which addresses the growing dread churned up by the extreme weather patterns/events that are crossing our continent. The psychologist being interviewed noted that people who are in touch with nature—farmers being one key demographic—are often most affected. The story really hit home with me.

The 2018 growing season was the hardest I have experienced. Hands down. Near-daily torrential rain caused ongoing flooding and kept the fields from ever drying out. Perhaps more problematic, the sun never shone for more than an hour or two at a time all summer long. My farm is on a rocky plateau that has always drained in previous rainy seasons. Last year there was (still is) standing water everywhere. The daily sound of thunder and heavy rain brought angry tears to my eyes over and over again. Crops rotted in the field. Others simply never even bloomed. I know what we experienced in Pennsylvania is just one extreme. I cannot even imagine fighting deadly fires or hurricanes.

But we're farmers. We don't give up easily. Instead we learn to adapt and have eternal hope for the next spring. Are we up to this new challenge of extreme seasons? Our strength is in our ever-growing numbers and our willingness to share all that we know.

One of the biggest challenges for many growers in the Northeast last autumn was getting dahlias dug and bulbs planted when the soil was saturated. The previous season I had experimented with leaving about a third of my dahlia tubers in the ground to overwinter. I had lots of tuber stock built up—plenty to spare—so it seemed a risk worth taking. The dahlias were cut back to the ground after the killing frost. I collected vanloads of leaves from my neighborhood and put a six-inch layer of leaves over the beds. Then a heavy, black silage tarp (ordered from Walmart) was pulled across the beds and pinned down with rocks and sand bags. Survival rate? I'd estimate 95% of the overwintered tubers re-sprouted! Success!

That little experiment saved my butt in the fall of 2018. With our fields too saturated to dig, I decided to leave in nearly all our dahlias, save for two varieties I wanted to divide to build up stock. Serendipity would have it that I made an acquaintance recently who works on billboards. He was able to bring me free old billboard tarps (they're black or gray on the backside so my field does NOT look like a giant advertisement for all the PHL air traffic flying overhead, though maybe that's a new revenue stream I should explore). In the end, it was still a massive amount of work to gather all those leaves and work with all those heavy tarps in the cold rain. But I'm fairly confident my dahlias will survive and, more importantly, my soil structure will be even better in the spring once the earthworms spend the winter processing all those leaves!

We're farmers. We don't give up easily. Instead we learn to adapt and have eternal hope for the next spring. Are we up to this new challenge of extreme seasons? Our strength is in our ever-growing numbers and our willingness to share all that we know.

While I'm on the topic of dahlias, we should all be keenly aware of crown gall and leafy gall. These two bacterial diseases are spreading more quickly as a greater number of small farms start selling their tuber stock to others in the farming community. If you haven't already, familiarize yourself with these two problematic diseases

and inspect your stored tubers closely for odd growth. If you had plants that grew like weeds last season but never really flowered, there's a good chance you have leaf gall! The bacteria, once in your soil, persists for many years, stunting dahlia production considerably.

I've had leafy gall in my field for two seasons now after ordering a batch of (infected) tubers from a small grower in 2016. I didn't know anything about galls in dahlias back then. I sure do now, and it is proving very tough to control! Any infected tubers must be thrown out. If a tuber looks even remotely "odd", we pitch it. When we dig and divide tubers, we have to be very careful with washing all our tools and not moving soil around in the field. Gall diseases are a second reason why I've decided to start overwintering the majority of my tubers in the ground in an effort to stop the spread of contaminated soil.

Cut Flower Garden
Woody Cut Stems
Specialty Cut Flowers
Postharvest Handling of Cut Flowers and Greens
A Practical Guide for Commercial Growers, Wholesalers & Retailers

If you are among the growers who has decided to sell some of your tuber stock, please be very careful not to send out any tubers that have abnormal growth. When in doubt, pitch it out!

I'd wager the winter issues of *The Cut Flower Quarterly* are the most thoroughly read. But all the past issues are also available for your winter reading pleasure at ASCFG.org. They're packed full of info that could make a big difference to your 2019 season. Go read them!

And don't forget to spend some time on the Facebook group page. What did you do this past season that helped your farm evolve to deal with harsh weather? Share so we can all grow stronger together in 2019!

Jennie Love is owner of Love 'n Fresh Flowers.
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The Farmer and the Florist

What Works, What Doesn't

Ellen Frost and Laura Beth Resnick

EF: Each winter, Laura Beth and I get together to talk over what worked during the previous season, what didn't work, and what we'd like to do differently in the new year. This is something we've been doing for years and something I would suggest all farmers do with their florist clients. Slower days in the off-season lend themselves to brainstorming and dreaming big. These meetings can set you up for success with your partners for the new year. Here's a little taste of what we talked about at this winter's meeting.

What worked great that we'll repeat next year?

LB: In the past, we delivered to LoCoFlo on Wednesdays, but in 2018 we added Fridays. The double deliveries were great for both of us! The additional delivery at the end of the week helped us sell everything that was left after the week's orders. Because we have a minimum ($100), it was always worth it to cut a Friday order. It also helped keep quick-blooming crops like cosmos clean; since we don't do any weekend markets or deliveries, we need that incentive to keep cutting through the end of the week.

To get Ellen availability for Friday, I sent her a text on Thursday afternoon with an informal list of what we could cut. I didn't include pricing or photos, since she could refer back to our availability list that went out earlier in the week if she wanted to check on the details. Then after her team finished their work on Thursday, she had a clear picture of what else they needed for Friday and texted me her order.

The only thing that was tough about Friday deliveries was getting them to LoCoFlo early enough in the morning. It was almost always a hurried, stressful harvest, and I never once arrived as early as I said I would. My solution is to hire more people for Fridays next season, since we'll likely offer a Friday delivery to some other florists too.

EF: Over the past few years, our business model and offerings have changed quite a bit. Six years ago, we offered only weddings. Now weddings are only 60% of our work while the other 40% is classes, subscriptions, and retail sales two days a week. One of those retail days is Wednesday night for our Open Studio, and the other is Saturday morning. Since sales on Wednesdays are unpredictable, I'm never sure how much material to order. I never want to over order and not be able to use/sell everything. Friday deliveries allow me to order on a more "as needed" basis. Additionally, we offer single orders for delivery, which are unpredictable in their number and schedule. A Friday delivery allows us take single orders freely, without having to worry about not having enough to sell to our retail customers on Saturday. Additionally, Friday delivery usually means Friday harvest, which means we are offering our Saturday retail clients the freshest product possible. I think the takeaway is to communicate your needs to your growers. They may not be able to accommodate your requests, but they might!

LB: Another thing we'd like to repeat in the future: sharing a worker. This season, we were lucky enough to find someone who wanted to work both at the farm and the studio. Jess started working with us in the fall of 2017. Since she was interested in farming and design, we recommended she look into the CASA/Future Harvest Beginner Farmer Training Program.The Beginning Farmer Training Program, through which Jess was an intern at Butterbee, is a training program for new farmers with three levels: one for beginners, the second for people who have some land but are very new farmers, and the third for established farmers in need of mentorship.

One day we were cutting hairy balls at the farm, and Jess said that it would be more useful if we cut them longer because the pods were typically used higher up in bouquets and arrangements. We started cutting them longer immediately! There were countless moments like that, when Jess gave us some much-needed perspective that improved our game.

EF: Sharing an employee with Butterbee Farm was a unique and fun experience. During the season, while Laura Beth and I talk several times most days, it's usually hurried and flower order specific. Having one of our staff members there every week was like having a farm reporter come and tell us everything that was happening at the farm, including what was being planted and harvested and what was coming in the weeks ahead.

What will we scrap next year?

LB: Last winter, I proposed that we try custom growing for Ellen's weddings. The idea was to get a solid sense of how much we needed to grow, of which crops, in advance. Ellen gave me the color schemes of about 10 weddings she had already booked. I created an Excel sheet for each wedding with a list of crops that I felt comfortable custom growing; then Ellen selected the crops and the number of bunches per crop for each wedding.

The majority of the crops I felt I could commit to a year in advance were dahlias, celosias, dusty miller, rosemary, gomphrena, eucalyptus, and grasses. In the end, we could provide mostly what I thought we could, with the exception of dusty miller and rosemary, which we had a terrible time with due to extremely wet weather.

The stress of having promised those crops so far in advance was a little much, and I won't custom grow in quite that way again any time soon. I did learn which crops I'm comfortable letting Ellen preorder far in advance (eucalyptus, dahlias, gomphrena), and next year I'll start opening preorders once I see that those crops are growing well.

EF: The idea of custom growing seemed like a good idea when Laura Beth and I first discussed it. It was an opportunity for me to place orders in the winter for some staple items I'd need for weddings each week. Often during the season, we're competing with other florists for a limited number of resources, especially highly sought-after materials like eucalyptus and dusty miller. Preordering seemed like a way to guarantee getting some of these items. I know that Laura Beth was stressed about not having items that were promised. For me, it wasn't a huge deal because with some notice, which she definitely gave me, I could search those items out from another grower. I'm glad we tried it, but it's okay that it didn't work out.

What new things are we trying this year?

LB: I'm prone to growing the tried and true varieties of everything, from basic dahlia ball types to reliable 'ProCut Gold' sunflowers. This past year, we got lots of requests from florists for weirder varieties, so I'm going to be adventurous and try some colorful sunflowers like 'ProCut Plum' and 'ProCut Yellow Red' as well as 'Moulin Rouge', 'ProCut White Nite', and a teddy bear variety called 'Double Quick Orange'. Same goes for scabiosa (we're trying Scoop scabiosa) and dahlias (we got some delicious decorative type tubers to try). We also just completed our first heated tunnel, so we'll try growing in the winter for the first time.

EF: Each year we do a class or two at Butterbee. It's a unique opportunity for our customers, many of whom live in the city, to experience the farm and learn a new skill. Part of our mission, since we started Local Color Flowers in 2008, was to connect our clients to the farmers who grow their flowers, and to the farms the flowers come from. In years past, we've partnered on classes at the farm including Floral Head Crowns, Floral Jewelry, and a special lavender class. This year, we are going to offer more unique classes throughout the year focused on floral hobbyists and enthusiasts. We're looking at classes like Still Lifes, Winter Wreaths, and more.

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Laura Beth Resnick is owner of Butterbee Farm.
Contact her at butterbeefarm@gmail.com

Hope Grows

Jodi Helmer

A North Carolina grower believes cut flowers can help preserve a family's 100-year farming legacy

Stephanie Frisbee still recalls the exact moment she decided to start growing flowers: In 2016, Frisbee was taking classes to become an extension master gardener, and a flower farmer came to the class to talk about her work.

"She told us about growing flowers for weddings and scheduling photo shoots on the farm and I thought, 'I could do that,'" she recalls.

Not long after the class, Frisbee started Hopeful Acres Farm and Gardens, growing flowers on a half-acre plot of land on her family farm. Although she grew up on a farm in China Grove, North Carolina, Frisbee never considered herself a farmer; her grandfather, father and brother were the "real farmers," raising corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, hay, and straw on the farm that has been in their family for more than 100 years.

In 2014, after her father died and her brother lost his job, Frisbee took on more farm responsibilities but recognized that handling the recordkeeping was not enough to sustain the farm for future generations. Although she questioned whether growing cut flowers would be profitable or sustainable on a farm that grew commodities, she decided to give it a shot.

"There was no time for research; I just jumped in and did it," she says.

You Can't Eat Flowers

While Frisbee was enthusiastic about the possibilities, she admits that not everyone in her family thought growing flowers was a good idea.

"We converted some of the vegetable land to grow flowers," she recalls. "My grandmother was skeptical; [she told me], 'You can't eat flowers.'"

The first season was all about trial and error as Frisbee learned about different varieties of cut flowers, set up drip irrigation, and spent countless hours weeding—and she did it while working a full-time job and raising two young sons. She admits that the juggling act is difficult but believes the long hours and late nights are worth it.

"I want our boys to love our farm and understand that everything I'm doing is for their future, to make sure the farm is always here for them," she says.

Stephanie Frisbee

As it turned, flowers and row crop farming were a great match. Frisbee often uses the cotton, wheat and crimson clover that her brother grows on the farm in her bouquets. Tending to a crop of her own also helped Frisbee embrace her inner farmer: She discovered that she loved growing flowers and had a knack for nurturing handfuls of seeds into beautiful blooms.

In 2017, Hopeful Acres Farm and Gardens started selling at local markets. During her first weekend farmers' market, Frisbee sold four bouquets.

"I was so nervous; I worried that people might not like my flowers or how I arranged them," she recalls. "Four bouquets might not seem like that many but I was so excited because I wasn't sure I'd sell any."

Expansion and Diversification

Before long, Hopeful Acres Farm and Gardens had regular market customers and orders for on-farm pickups from those who couldn't make it to her booth on Saturday mornings. Last summer, Frisbee grew all the flowers for a wedding, and supplied bouquets for a luncheon at North Carolina State University; she hopes special events will become a growing part of her business.

The farm has expanded: Frisbee grows 28 varieties of cut flowers, including tulips, calendula, sunflowers, lavender, basil, ornamental kale, and zinnias. She added eight low tunnels and borrows space in a family greenhouse to start seedlings—and she does it all while working full-time in the county parks and recreation departments where she teaches others how to start their own gardens.

On her own farm, Frisbee is focused on more efficient operations. In addition to investing in infrastructure such as a mulch layer and walk-in cooler, Frisbee prioritizes marketing, thinking about how Hopeful Acres Farm and Gardens is different from other local growers.

Before expanding to a second, larger market where she was one of three flower farmers, Frisbee visited the market to check out the competition. She did not want to undercut their prices and wanted her blooms to stand out. Instead of bringing bouquets, Frisbee showcased fresh flowers in chalk-painted mason jars. The research paid off and the mason jars were a hit.

"Our flowers represent the quality of our farm and what we stand for," she says. "I take pride in it and I want to share it with others."

At the end of another successful season, Frisbee is looking toward the future. She hopes to add a high tunnel and include agri-tourism activities, including photo sessions and art on the farm events.

"I work so hard and hope it'll help secure the future of our farm," she explains. "But it's not just about ensuring our farm is around for another 100 years but that all farms are around for another 100 years."

Jodi Helmer is a freelance writer in North Carolina. Contact her at jodi@jodihelmer.com

Boxwood: When Have You Had Enough?

Stanton Gill

Specialty cut flower growers often use filler or background plant material to accent their flower displays. During the winter many people use the evergreen foliage of boxwood. The plants lend themselves to frequent cutting with good recouping ability during the growing season. The foliage is deep green, adding to the beauty of several styles of arrangements.

The problem is that all is not well in the boxwood world.

A nasty foliar disease imported from Europe is now rampaging through boxwood nurseries, as well as plantings in landscapes and cut flower operations. The Latin name is *Cylindrocladium buxicola*. Once a plant is infested it defoliates, and dies very rapidly. The fungus also infects the stems, resulting in distinctive and diagnostic dark brown to black lesions, sometimes with an angular, diamond-like pattern. Black lesions can be found along a stem, from the soil line to the shoot tips. Unfortunately, this disease is easily spread from plant to plant.

Making Lemonade from Lemons

Lately I have been searching for good uses for dead boxwoods. I found that owing to its fine grain it makes an excellent wood for carving. Wood carvers tell me they cannot get enough good boxwood of useable diameter. The boxwood is also resistant to splitting and chipping. It has been used for years to make decorative boxes and hair combs, as well as carved chess pieces.

Boxwood was once called dudgeon, and was used for the handles of dirks and daggers. Boxwood was a common material for the manufacture of flutes and recorders in the eighteenth century, and a large number of mid- to high-end instruments made today are produced from one or other species of boxwood. Even bagpipes used to have chanters made from boxwood.

What is Going Down?

If you are a woody cut stem grower struggling with keeping boxwood alive you may be pondering "Why did I plant those #$%@ boxwoods in the first place?" Last fall's warm, humid weather on the East Coast resulted in a mega infection period, resulting in massive boxwood leaf drop in October. We were flooded with calls and emails about boxwood blight for about a three-week period. It was not until the temperatures fell into the 30F range that the leaf drop stopped.

Karen Rane and David Clement visited a site in Maryland where the manager had religiously applied fungicides on a weekly basis the whole summer into the fall, and his boxwoods looked pretty good. This worked but is this what an IPM approach is about? If you have to spray something regularly just to keep it alive it begs the question "Is this really worth it?"

Boxwood blight is here and it will rear its ugly head again next season. The long-range solution is to find the genes that enable boxwood to resist this disease and work them into a new line of resistant plants. This is years off in the future. Meanwhile, you should really look at whether boxwood is such a good idea.

Boxwood blight leaf lesions

Boxwood blight cankers

As If That Wasn't Bad Enough

Not to throw fuel onto an already flaring fire but we also have a new bug entering the picture.

In Europe it's called the boxwood tree moth, but in the U.S. people are calling it boxwood moth. Its Latin name is *Cydalima perspectalis,* and it is in the family Crambidae. It is from Asia (Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, and Russian Far East) and showed up in Germany in 2006, then appeared in Switzerland and the Netherlands in 2007. It was found in Great Britain and France in 2008, and in 2012, it was introduced from Italy to Sochi with the planting stock of *Buxus sempervirens*. This little, actually pretty moth, is working across the European community rapidly. The moth has not made a splash in the Americas, but several specimens were found in Ontario, Canada in late August of 2018. It's just a short matter of time until it shows up in the United States.

The larvae feed on the leaves and shoots of *Buxus* species. The young larvae eat only the upper part of the leaf. The leaves are not destroyed completely but appear as "peeled" or shredded almost completely, and eventually die. Older larvae are the most damaging: they massively and completely eat the leaves, sometimes leaving a thin part at the contour and center of the leaf. Green, ball-shaped frass (caterpillar poop) can usually be seen on host plants.

Every plant has at least one or two disease and insect pests; boxwood just seems to be really good at accumulating a plethora of problems. It might be wise to explore other plants that do not give you heartburn.

Stanton Gill is Extension Specialist in Nursery and Greenhouse IPM, Central Maryland Research and Education Center, University of Maryland Extension and Professor with the Landscape technology Program, Montgomery College. Contact him at sgill@umd.edu

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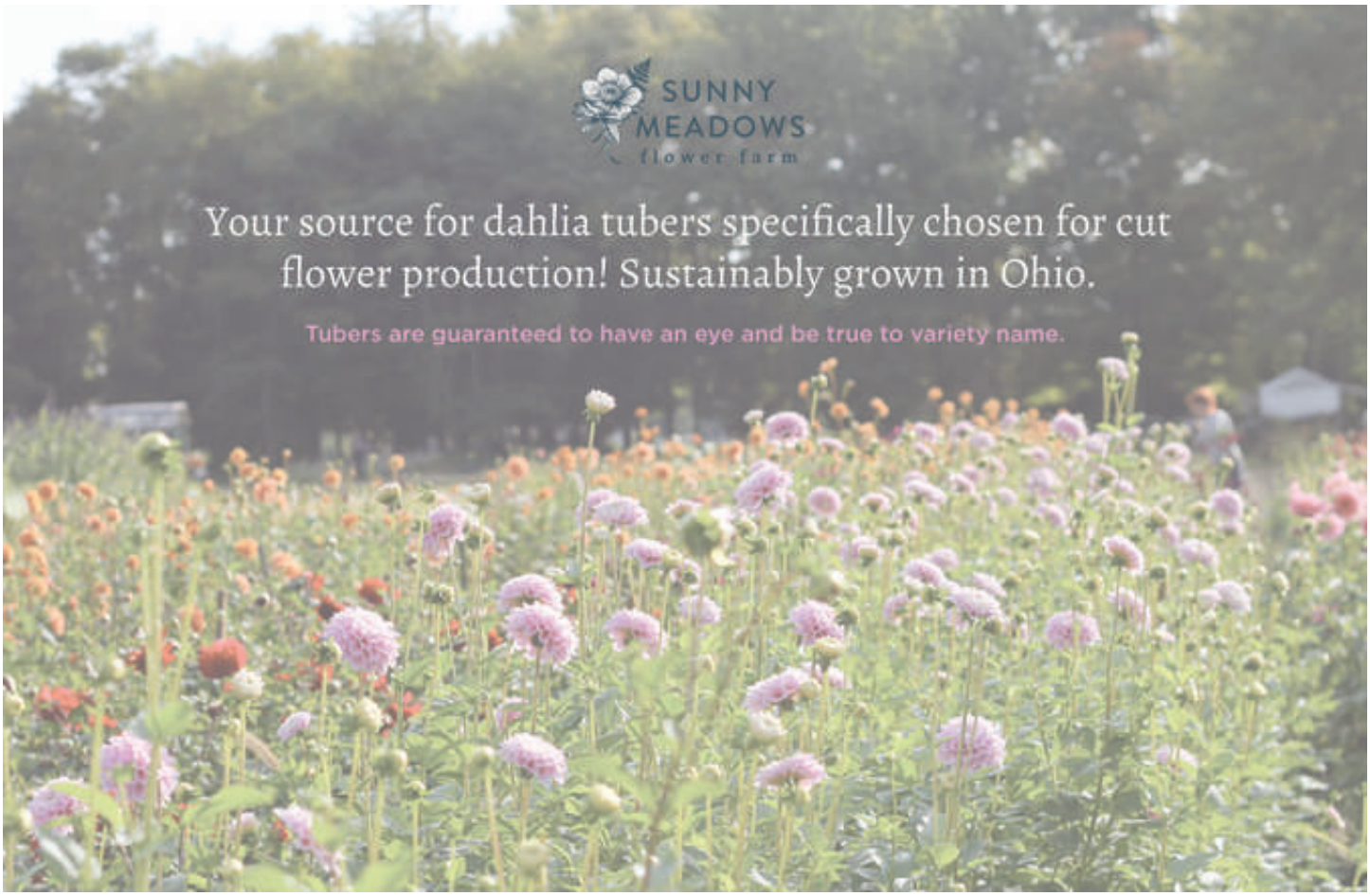
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Your source for dahlia tubers specifically chosen for cut flower production! Sustainably grown in Ohio.
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2019 New Varieties

A Word About This Section

Traditionally, the New Varieties chapter was included in the Winter issue of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, with the intention that growers would have time to browse the descriptions and photos of the latest cut flower releases. As ASCFG membership exploded, and as many of these growers are stretching their growing seasons earlier and later in the year, the need for providing information before January became apparent. This is why the initial collection of New Varieties was printed in the fall 2018 issue, with the supplemental listings appearing here. As we move through 2019, we hope to provide all the New Varieties listings in the fall issue.

Flamingo Holland

'Zelmira'

OT Lily 'Zelmira'
'Zelmira' is one of the few salmon toned OT hybrids that also has a wonderful fragrance! You can count on a high bloom production and sturdy stems to hold those blooms aloft. 'Zelmira' has an extremely long bloom life and an average height of 47-50". Growing time is approximately 85-95 days with a bud count of 3-5 on a 16/18 bulb.

Roselily 'Dejima'
A new addition to the Roselily family is 'Dejima'. It is a pollen-free Oriental with large double blooms. Pure snow white blooms offer a blizzard of overlapping petals. This flower defines decadence. 'Dejima' was a Blue Ribbon winner at the SAF Outstanding Varieties competition. Roselilies are fragrant and have an exceptionally long flowering period. Average 4-6 blooms on 16/18 bulb. Growing time is approximately 100-110 days.

'Dejima'

Roselily 'Thalissa'
If you love 'Stargazer' lilies, then you are bound to love this double version lookalike. It is a pollen-free Oriental with large double flowers. Blooms are a gorgeous rich pink with spotted petals. As with all roselilies, 'Thalissa' has a soft, light, pleasant fragrance. Average 3-5 blooms on 15/17 bulb. Growing time is approximately 100-110 days.

LA Lily 'Vierne'
LA hybrid lilies are a cross between a longiflorum lily and an Asiatic lily. They combine the soft fragrance of the longiflorums and the color range of the Asiatics. Flower size is larger than a standard Asiatic. 'Vierne' has a gorgeous white flower on strong sturdy stems. This is a terrific choice for bouquets with its upward facing blooms. Height is approximately 35-38" with a 3-5 bud count on a 14/16 bulb. Growing time is approximately 100-110 days.

LA Lily 'Akron'
'Akron' is a bright orange beauty with excellent vase life. Height is approximately 42-46" with a 3-5 bud count on a 14/16 bulb. Growing time is approximately 90-95 days.

'Thalissa'

'Vierne'

'Akron'

Jelitto Perennial Seed

'Pink Princess'

Delphinium New Millennium 'Pink Princess'
Growing to 32 inches tall, 'Pink Princess' offers brilliant soft pink flower spikes June to September. Zones 3-8.

Schizostylis coccinea
The Kaffir lily in a lovely mix of pinks and reds! Summer blooms of dainty lily flowers on 28-inch stalk with narrow, blade-like foliage. Zones 7-9.

Kaffir lily

NuFlowers

Sunflower 'ProCut Horizon'
Loaded with perfectly formed, upward-facing blooms opening with rich, overlapping orange petals surrounding a traditional dark disk, 'ProCut Horizon' is a cut flower grower's dream hybrid with consistent uniformity producing a high number of usable stems. Like 'ProCut Orange Excel', 'ProCut Horizon' with its upright, pollen-free flowers is daylength neutral and has a single stem. It is medium early in maturity.

'ProCut Horizon'

Spring Meadow Nursery

Scentara Pura

***Lilac* Scentara Pura™**
Super hardy and fragrant, this well-branched, semi-dwarf, compact lilac blooms heavily each spring. The flower buds emerge a mulberry-violet and open to clear jacaranda purple. Developed from low-chill bloodlines for improved warm climate performance and resistant to powdery mildew.

Willow Black Cat®
Extra-large black catkins appear in late winter, giving this plant unique appeal for cut flower sales as well as in the landscape. Larger catkins than *Salix gracilistyla* 'Melanostachys'. Formerly known as *S. chaenomeloides*, which was recently proven to be a naturally-occurring hybrid between *Salix gracilistyla* and *S. caprea*.

***Physocarpus* Summer Wine® Black**
Deep purple-black foliage—the darkest of any ninebark—give Summer Wine® Black a dramatic presence. With its semi-dwarf, compact habit, and disease resistant foliage, it offers outstanding potential for cut flower growers.

Summer Wine Black

Black Cat

A Cut Above

CUT FLOWER OF THE YEAR ASCFG 2019

QUICK FIRE®

Hydrangea paniculata 'Bulk' USPP 16,812; CBR 3398

Fill your buckets and bouquets with the 2019 ASCFG Woody Cut of the Year! The earliest reblooming *H. Paniculata* available, Quick Fire® hydrangea's white blooms appear early in the season and turn deep pink before other panicle hydrangeas even begin to flower. Its lacecap blooms are lightly fragrant and a stunner in bouquets, wreaths and large-scale designs. Go ahead, cut all you want, they'll grow right back!

Thank you ASCFG, for choosing Quick Fire® *H. Paniculata* as the 2019 Woody Cut of the Year.

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2018 ASCFG Dahlia Cut Flower Trial Report

John M. Dole, Nathan Jahnke, Ingram F. McCall, Ben Bergmann, and Judy M. Laushman

With their luscious colors and myriad forms, dahlias are hard to resist. Our customers apparently agree, as dahlias continue to be one of today's trendiest cut flowers. Yet choosing which cultivars to grow can be challenging as hundreds are available, most of which are destined for home gardens, and don't have the productivity, stem length or vase life needed by commercial cut flower growers. With that in mind we established the first ASCFG Dahlia Cut Flower Trial in 2018. Thanks to the generosity of Ednie Flower Bulbs, a division of Fred C Gloeckner & Co, Inc., and Tall Grass Farm, our Trialers had eight cultivars to evaluate.

The clear favorite in the Trial was 'Beaucon White', which scored with beautiful, full, white flowers, a desirable vase life, and long stems. While its natural niche was wedding designs, it also worked well in bouquets. Stem length averaged a little over 20 inches, with at least one Trialer harvesting 30-inch stems. One Trialer strongly encouraged pinching the plants to produce longer stems, and another suggested providing support due to the large, heavy flowers. Bugs and bruising were issues on the white petals.

'Baron Katie' was the next highest ranked. Its peachy mango hues are ideal for blending colors in bouquets and arrangements. Trialers harvested close to 10 stems per plant, which averaged around 18 inches long. Some harvested up to 30 stems per plant. Plants were steady producers of flowers most of the season.

'Face of Summer' is an eye-catching red and yellow cactus-type dahlia, or, as one Trialer put it: "I LOVED this fiery cactus!" Stems averaged about 17 inches long, with close to 10 harvested from each plant. While 'Beaucon White' may have garnered the top scores, 'Face of Summer' seemed to get the most exclamation points and "loves" in the comments.

Of the eight cultivars from two companies, based on the combined ratings score (market appreciation + repeat again + ease of cultivation), the top-ranked cultivars were 'Baron Katie', 'Beaucon White', and 'Face of Summer'. These cultivars will be nominated for the ASCFG Cut Flower of the Year.

Interpreting the Trial results: The numbers reported are averages of all the respondents. Many factors will affect the success of any cultivar. Our participants grow and harvest plants using several methods. After noting the average, check the range of responses listed below each number to see how the cultivar performed at its best and its worst. If the range of responses in the ratings is narrow and high, i.e., 3-5 or 4-5, the plant was a winner for most of the respondents and is likely to do well for you. The "Repeat Again Rating" is particularly important because it indicates if the Trialer would take the time, money, and space to actually grow the cultivar again. Review the Trial results carefully. If a variety sounds interesting, but did not appear to do well, try it anyway; it may work well for you.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to each of the 8 evaluators who returned their Trial evaluations! We very much appreciate the time it takes to grow and score the plants, and submit data. We want to especially thank Liz Cardella for being the first Trialer to return her ratings. Thank you to Ednie/Gloeckner and Tall Grass Farms for providing the plant materials. We would also like to thank Cristian Loyola for assisting with the NCSU trials. In preparing the report we did a bit of editing of the comments for space and clarity; our apologies if we've altered the tone or content of anyone's comments.

Summary of Comments

Note: many respondents did not make specific comments on each cultivar and in a few cases, comments have been shortened because of limited space.

'Baron Katie'

Good Qualities: Loved the color (4), Orange yellow salmon color—WOW—an orange sherbet to deep peach; A great complement to the "bright" colors I had requests for; Great producer of flowers throughout the season, fun color to work with in bouquets and at farmers' markets, customers at farmers' markets loved the color and the form, strong, healthy plants; Prolific, great size for market and CSA bunches, packs well in the buckets/cooler, nice strong stems in early season, seemed unfazed by wet season—not much mildew, botrytis.

Problems: No cultivation problems, it was a medium height, steady producer, I'm slow to warm to this form, it was nice but not amazing; Stems were not very long, and it was a low producer; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain; Slightly weak stems, not a wholesale/designer color, not as long of a vase life as other flower forms; Some later-season stems got spindly.

Similar Cultivars: Similar to 'Karma Naomi' in how prolific and how long and

'Baron Katie'

Participating Companies

Ednie/Gloeckner
Fredon, NJ
ednieflowerbulb.com

Tall Grass Farms
Medical Lake, WA
tallgrass-farms.com

Participating Trialers

Liz Cardella
Collie Flower Farm
Woodstock, IL
Zone 5

Laura Dison
Green Door Gourmet
Nashville, TN
Zone 7a

Julio Freitas
The Flower Hat
Bozeman, MT
Zone 4

Nathan Jahnke/John Dole
NC State University
Raleigh, NC
Zone 7a

Erin McMullen
Rain Drop Farm
Philomath, OR
Zone 8b

Marina Michahelles
Shoving Leopard Farm
Red Hook, NY
Zone 5b

Adam and Jennifer O'Neal
Pepper Harrow Farm
Winterset, IA
Zone 5

Tom and Deni Peterson
Blue Door Garden
Abingdon, VA
Zone 6b

'Beaucon White'

strong the stems are (very different color). *Postharvest Recommendations:* Cut early in day, fully open into warm water, when water cooled, it went into cooler at 40 degrees.
Comments: Kept blooming until the end, steady harvest from end of June to October; So prolific! worth growing for grocery/market sales for sure; Got lots of tubers, will grow again!

'Beaucon White'
Good Qualities: Beautiful full white blooms (4); Long vase life!!!; A very nice productive white, a decorative form makes it easy to use in bouquets and wedding work, grew tall quickly and was a steady producer, stems were very long, disbudding produced nice 5-inch blooms; Vigorous grower, long stems, production continued even in the middle of summer into October; Heavy bloom in October, long, arm's-length stems, late to bloom, but when it came in—AMAZING, nice size!; Very much in demand for weddings and design work, good stem length and strength; Incredible 6-inch wide, blooms that are perfect for weddings, the plants were not as prolific as other white varieties, but the larger blooms made for a nice focal flower, so it's a good trade-off, plants were healthy with strong, tall stems, we missed pinching a couple of plants, and the stems weren't as long, but the ones that we did pinch deep came out with nice long stems; Tiniest hint of blush, like the up-facing habit—nice for bouquets, market bunches.
Problems: Bugs seemed to be more attracted to the white dahlias (2), they had to be monitored and cut early; Japanese beetles love light colors and white must be very delicious, spraying helps, as well as deadheading any spent blooms, clean rows don't attract as many bugs; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain; Late to bloom; May need staking in areas with wind, sustained a lot of insect damage, due to color and size of bloom, made overall production drop significantly; The problem isn't this cultivar alone, but as any white flower, they bruise easily and it shows, the pinching is also not a problem *per se*, but the plant definitely benefits from pinching to encourage longer stems; Had to cover the buds, stems a bit on the thick side, even after pinching.
Similar Cultivars: None that I'm aware of. (2); 'White Alva' would be pretty similar, 'Beaucon White' was the second largest white bloom we grew, after 'White Alva', but 'Beaucon White' had a more defined petal shape.
Postharvest Recommendations: CVBN tablet as well as t-bag, this one can go straight to water, though; Early in the day harvest 3/4 to fully open into warm water, when water cools they go into Coolbot at 40 degrees; Can pick slightly closed and they will still open; We place stems in clean buckets with clean water and the Chrysal t-bags, we don't burn stems or treat them with boiling water, I harvested when the outer petals were just perpendicular to the stem and the center petals still unfurling, which extended the vase life.
Comments: We love the long stems and long-lasting blooms, we just wish it would pump out more blooms per plant!; I will add some of these to my hoophouse dahlias next season along with burgundy varieties and the ever-popular CAL, all requested wedding colors!; Really nice larger white option; Love it!!; Got lots of tubers, will grow again!

'Face of Summer'
Good Qualities: I LOVED this fiery cactus (4)! flaming orange with inner yellow, HOT COLOR; Every time I harvested a stem, "Bamboleo" got stuck in my head, and I really DID feel like it was summer in the 1980s :), bunches with this one in it were the first to sell, especially in late September, early October; They are very showy and eye-catching, and it would make a perfect garden plant, especially if clumped together for more color-blocking effect, it's also a very tall plant! we planted 5, but only one successfully grew and bloomed, towering at 52 inches; This was my favorite of the Trial! it shot up out of the ground becoming taller than me (5 foot 6), very productive with a nice form and the color reminded me of flames, the red/yellow combo was great all summer into fall, I suggested this variety to my florists several times for funeral arrangements for men, I thought it was a masculine bloom, lol!; Very sturdy, upright, dependable cultivar, mixed well in bouquets, strong head; Perfect for summer and fall work, very long stems, awesome! very productive.

'Face of Summer'

Every time I harvested a stem, "Bamboleo" got stuck in my head, and I really DID feel like it was summer in the 1980s.

'Hapet Duo'

Problems: The bright colors can be off-putting to some, while others may love it, it may be a great focal flower for a market bouquet, but not a wedding flower; None, a real winner!; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain; Needs to be trellised, long, roaming stems; A bit of insect damage.
Similar Cultivars: Not that I know of; Nope, it is unique, singular, one-of-a-kind.
Postharvest Recommendations: I used clean water with a Chrysal t-bag; I left one side bud develop on this variety, it looks charming with another bud, I always use the Swan Island warm water method; We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler; It seemed to do fine in the cooler once it had taken up water.
Comments: Love this one! (2); Only one plant grew and bloomed out of the 5 tubers, the others grew, but didn't bloom; Got lots of tubers, will grow again!

'Hapet Duo'
Good Qualities: A nice color (4), soft yellow in the center with hot pink tips; Stems were strong (2); Very sturdy, upright, dependable cultivar, mixed well in bouquets, strong head; Front-facing bloom; Straight stems.
Problems: Very slow to produce, disappointing since it was a nice color combo, at the end of the season it is full of buds, not sure they have the conditions to develop before we get a frost, an underachiever; One of the tubers was NOT like the other, producing bright cosmo pink blooms which were very nice, no idea what it was, 'Hapet Duo' was very pale, bug magnet, mixed colors hard to work with, too pale for fall work, only 3 out of 25 late October blooms usable due to bug damage; Short stems (again, wet season, and it was in the wettest part of the field), slow production; We got only 2 of what I think this was supposed to be, the other 3 were random tubers, the stems were short and the flowers were hard to harvest before they discolored on the back side; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, die out from too much rain, needs staking.
Similar Cultivars: 'Miss Molly'; Similar color to 'Zingaro', but much stronger stems, slightly tighter petals.
Postharvest Recommendations: We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler.
Comments: I'll give it a second chance hoping to get it planted earlier, we had a challenging season, too cold, too wet, then blazing hot; I did not get any usable tubers, again because of the wet season; Not overly impressed, but really didn't have a lot to base that on, since I'm not 100% sure we got any of the right one.

'Jowey Martina'
Good Qualities: A nice bright yellow ball type (3), cute!; Very sturdy, upright, dependable cultivar, mixed well in bouquets, strong head; Large ball shaped; Nice in grocery/market bouquets, great form and strong stems, good vase life; Smaller flower.
Problems: Very late to start blooms, not very productive, yellowing leaves in late July possibly due to drought stress, but other cultivars growing around them didn't show the same stress; Lost all but one plant because of a very wet spring, these were at the end of the row and the remaining plant seemed slow all season, we had more rain for each storm than is usual, I think the plant was stressed; Not a very in-demand color for our main sales, worked for us in grocery and farmers' market; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain.
Similar Cultivars: 'Yellow Symphony', The bright yellow is similar in color to 'Sparkle' but not in shape.
Postharvest Recommendations: I use the warm water method from Swan Island, my cooler is set to 40 degrees; We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler.
Comments: I'll try to increase these and try again, I'll plant them in a different spot since it seems more sensitive to flooding; Bright yellow, large, ball-shaped type attracted customers, especially in fall bouquets—the yellow really popped.

'Karma Gold'

'Karma Gold'
Good Qualities: Excellent buttery golden yellow color (5); Nice size and form; Strong stems; Very sturdy, upright cultivar, mixed well in bouquets; Large flower, stocky stem, pale peach with orange edges—amazing color; Nice full blooms, good stem length and strength, we liked this one for market sales, and bouquet work, it was just gold enough to blend well with lots of color palettes; Strong stem, nice size bloom for market bunches.
Problems: Slow grower (3); Short stems (2); I lost some with heavy rain but the remaining plants never took off, they put out a nice flower here and there but the stem was so short to be unusable; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain; Never enough stems; Bug damage early in season; Need to cut deep to produce longer stems; None outstanding, it was a very WET season, and all the dahlias suffered.
Similar Cultivars: Looks great with 'Nicholas'!; None that I currently grow.
Postharvest Recommendations: We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler; I did use clean, room temp water, changed daily for each of the Trial cultivars and had 4-8 days vase life, CSA members reported having success with 1 tsp. white vinegar and 1/2 tsp. sugar per quart of water, resulting in extended vase life.
Comments: I wonder if this variety was affected by the crazy weather, it just never earned its keep; I will grow it again.

'Red Cap'
Good Qualities: Loved the clear red color (5); Great size and shape, straight stems; Smaller flower size; Good bloom shape, good for farmers' market; Easy for market harvest, marketable, stores easily, stink bugs and Japanese beetles did not go for it.
Problems: Weak stems (2); Flower heads were perpendicular to stem, so positioning them in a vase with other flowers was difficult; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching; Not a very popular color, inconsistent flowering week to week, heads were smaller than other red cultivars such as 'Cornell'; Short stems, two tubers didn't grow, late to start blooming; Only marketable for us through grocery and farmers markets, not a hot color for designers or florists; It was a wet, wet season, and this did not perform as well as it could have.
Similar Cultivars: 'Cornell' but better!; Similar habit to 'Cornell', but true red color.
Postharvest Recommendations: We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler; Harvesting before the centers popped, which it did a little more quickly than we like; I did use clean, room temp water, changed daily for each of the Trial cultivars and had 4-8 day vase life, CSA members reported having success with 1 tsp. white vinegar and 1/2 tsp. sugar per quart of water in extending vase life.
Comments: I will grow it again.

'Red Cap'

'Selina'
Good Qualities: Nice color (2); Very unique, spidery petals tinged with deep pink, loved the shape. Looked like a sunset!; Sorry, none, this one was a real stinker!
Problems: Flowers were deformed (3) and not pretty; Bug magnet! (2), lost more than half the blooms to bug damage, as you can tell, this was my least favorite of the Trial, it's an unusual-looking flower, they did not look like the pictures online, I don't know if it was the plant itself or if it was the weather, I did sell 2 blooms at the end of the season as " weird" flowers that fit a certain color scheme, I will not save these for next year; Too short; Thrips, aphids, caterpillars, needs staking and early pinching, die out from too much rain; Low number of harvestable stems; two of five tubers didn't grow; We got only two of these true to name; The stems weren't very long or strong.
Similar Cultivars: None listed.
Postharvest Recommendations: We sear stem ends by placing into 160-180° water and allow to cool for 1 hour, then we store dahlias in 40° cooler.
Comments: Thumbs down on this one for me; This dahlia needs protection, may consider netting blooms next year, spectacular when they bloomed unblemished, but it was rare; We just couldn't get this cultivar to work for us, in grocery, farmers' market or wholesale.

Table 1. The first row of data for each cultivar is the average, and the second row is the range of responses. Note when only one response is shown in the range line, all respondents gave the same rating.

Cultivar	Plant survival and flowering (%)	Yield (stems/plant)	Stem length (inches)[1]	Market appreciation rating[2]	Ease of cultivation rating[2]	Grow again rating[2]	Postharvest life (days)
Baron Katie	72 0-100	9.6 2-30	17.8 12-24	4.0 3-5	4.4 2-5	3.6 1-5	5.7 4-7
Beaucon White	78 0-100	7.4 3-33	20.6 15-30	5.0 5	4.6 3-5	5.0 5	6.5 3-12
Face of Summer	70 20-100	9.9 5-20	16.7 10-20	3.8 1-5	4.0 3-5	4.0 1-5	6.0 5-7
Hapet Duo	71 40-100	7.6 3-25	15.2 10-20	3.4 3-4	3.5 2-5	3.0 2-5	5.0 4-7
Jowey Martina	45 13-80	8.1 5-15	15.4 10-24	3.8 3-5	3.6 3-4	3.2 2-5	7.3 6-9
Karma Gold	68 30-100	6.1 5-12	13.1 8-24	3.6 1-5	3.3 1-4	3.8 1-5	6.0 5-7
Red Cap	61 19-100	9.2 6-20	15.3 8-24	3.5 2-5	4.0 3-5	3.6 2-5	5.5 4-7
Selina	43 0-100	4.1 0-13	16.0 6-24	2.5 1-5	2.0 1-3	1.6 1-4	-

[1]Data shown are from the respondents who harvested stems. Some Trialers may have not harvested stems because they were too short. The stems, not the Trialers.
[2]1 to 5 scale with 5 being the best; market appreciation ratings are based on sales to wholesalers, retailers and/or final consumers.

NC STATE UNIVERSITY College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

NCSU Leads the Way in Cut Flower Research

Did you know that *Helianthus salicifolius* 'First Light' makes a great cut flower? Have you ever wondered how many species and cultivars NCSU and the ASCG have trialed since the program began? Which lily varieties were evaluated in 2016? The place to find the answers to these questions and many more is https://cutflowers.ces.ncsu.edu/. You may read all the Seed Trial results since 1993, and the Perennial and Woody Trial results since we started those in 1998 and 2003, respectively. For each cultivar, you will find the trial data, participants' comments, supplier information, and in some cases, photos. Beside Trial information, the website also includes our postharvest reports, a brief history of specialty cut flower production, links to other sites, and much more.

Ben Bergmann and John Dole

Extending Cut Dahlia Vase Life

Ben A. Bergmann, Iftikhar Ahmad, John M. Dole
North Carolina State University

Cut dahlias are perennially popular with growers and consumers because of their stunning beauty, and amazingly diverse colors, shapes, and sizes. Unfortunately, they also typically have a short vase life. We wondered if treating cut dahlias with plant growth regulators (PGRs) would increase vase life as with other flowers treated with cytokinin (iris, petunia, and wintersweet) or gibberellic acid (daffodil, lantern lily, and rose). We pulsed dahlia stems with benzyladenine (BA, a cytokinin), gibberellic acid (GA_{4+7}), or both at the same time before observing flower quality and vase life.

We used flowers from two sources: 1) Three cultivars ('Karma Amora', 'Karma Prospero', 'Nathalie G.') dry packed and shipped from a commercial grower in Virginia (received 48 hours post cut, Fig. 1) and 2) Mixed cultivars held continuously in water from three ASCFG farmers close to NCSU (received 36 hours post cut, Fig. 2). We delivered PGRs to stems by recutting and placing them into the treatment solutions (Table 1) and holding them at 40±2 °F for 24 hours. Two control treatments were applied in the same way: tap water or Chrysal BVB. Post pulse treatment stems were recut and placed individually into jars in tap water for observation in conditions that mimic a typical home (70±2 °F under 200 footcandles of fluorescent light for 12 hours per day at 40-60% relative humidity).

Several PGR pulse treatments improved flower quality after 4 days in vase and extended vase life for both dry- and wet-handled flowers compared to tap water (Table 1). The combination of 20 ppm each of BA and GA resulted in the same or better flower quality after 4 days and the same or longer vase life than either PGR used alone at 20 ppm. The maximum benefit of the combined PGRs was achieved at a lower concentration for dry-handled flowers than for wet-handled flowers, perhaps because they took up more solution during the pulse treatment. Flowers pulsed with 2 ml/liter Chrysal BVB did not perform as well as the better BA/GA combinations.

Compared to flowers treated with tap water only, pulsing stems with a solution containing BA and GA increased vase life of wet- and dry-handled flowers by up to 1.8 days (45%) and 2.0 days (43%), respectively, and flower quality was notably better during this extended time (Fig. 3).

Preparation of a solution containing 20 ppm BA and 20 ppm GA is simple and may be cost effective for a small-scale grower. There are commercially available products that contain equal amounts of these two PGRs such as Fresco® (made by Fine Americas, Inc. and what we used) and Fascination® (made by Valent BioSciences LLC). Both of these are readily available, contain 1.8% BA and 1.8% GA, and come with simple instructions to make a 20 ppm solution, i.e. 0.14 fluid ounces per gallon tap water. A quart of these products costs approximately $150, so a gallon of the 20 ppm diluted solution costs ~$0.65, or ~$0.02 per stem if a gallon is used to pulse 30 stems.

Because previous work showed that dahlia vase life can be extended by placing flowers in a holding solution overnight, it may be that combining a PGR pulse with a holding solution treatment, either simultaneously or sequentially, will promote longer vase life than either alone, but we have not tested this idea as yet.

Acknowledgements. Thank you very much to Bloomia USA, Fernrock Farm, Happy as a Coneflower Farm, and Sassafras Fork Farms for providing the cut dahlias. Their contributions are greatly appreciated. Also, we want to mention that Iftikhar Ahmad is a faculty member at the Institute of Horticultural Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, who has been working with us for many years.

Fig. 1. Dry-handled 'Karma Prospero', 'Karma Amora', and 'Nathalie G.' (left to right) shown while hydrating after we received them.

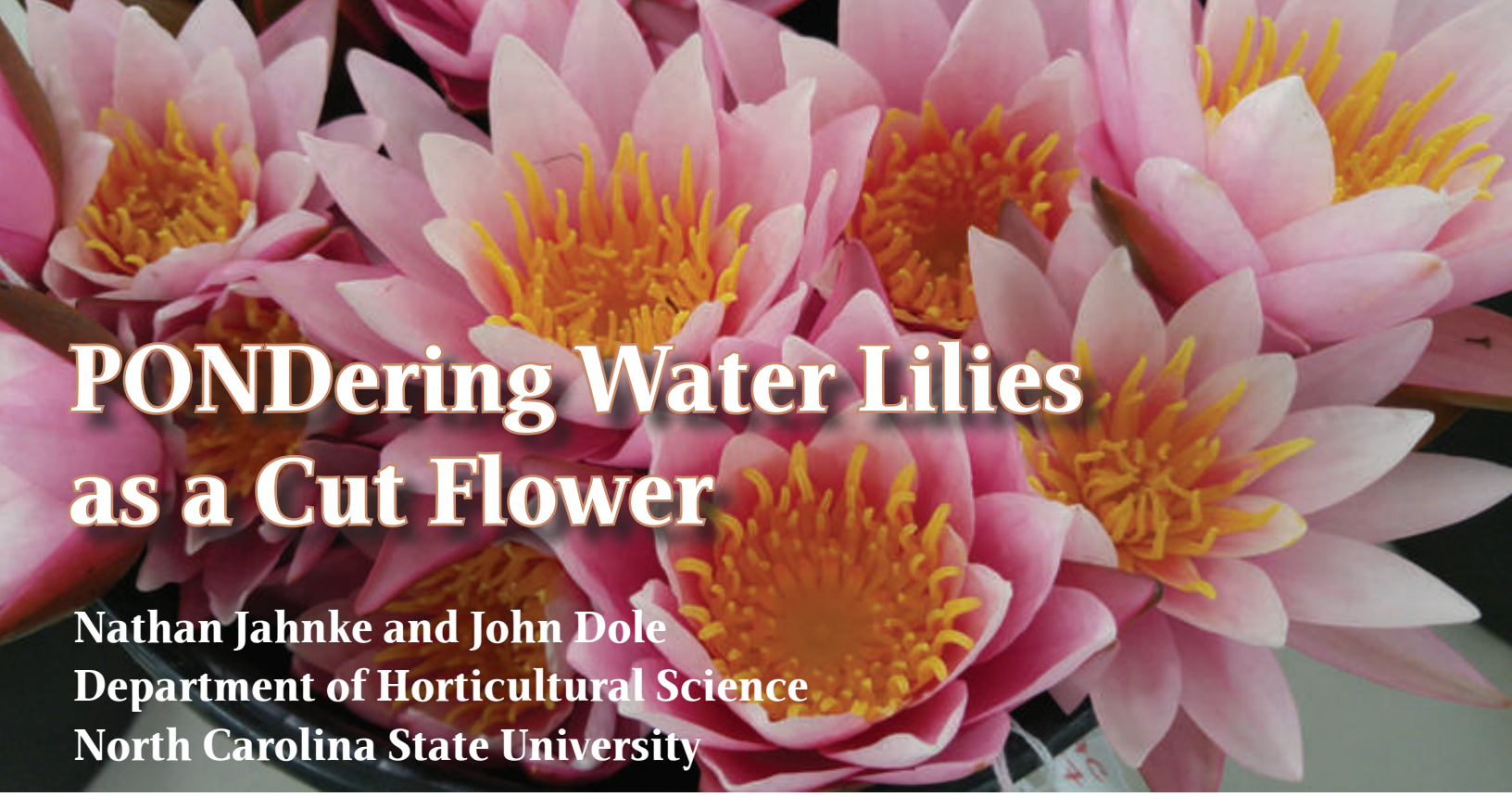
Fig. 2. Mixed cultivars grown by local ASCFG members were used for the wet-handled flowers, including 'Belle of Barmera', 'Blue Bell', 'Henriette', 'Boom Boom White', 'Jowey (Jowie) Linda', 'Karma Fiesta', 'Karma Gold', 'Karma Sangria', 'Snoho Doris', and 'Woodland Taco Time'.

Fig. 3. Flower quality rating was assessed after 4 days in vase using a five-point scale from 1 = 0-10% wilting or discoloration to 5 = 76-100% wilting or discoloration. Shown is a 'Boom Boom White' flower rated 4 (right) pulsed with tap water and a flower rated 1 pulsed with 10 ppm BA+GA. A stem was terminated when about half of the flower was discolored or wilted or the stem bent past a right angle.

Table 1. Cut dahlia flower quality after four days and vase life following a 24-hour pulse treatment with the plant growth regulators benzyladenine (BA) and gibberellic acid (GA).

	Flower quality[z] after 4 days			Vase life (days)		
Treatment[y]	Dry-handled	Wet-handled	Both	Dry-handled	Wet-handled	Both
Tap Water	4.0	2.9	3.5	4.0	4.7	4.4
20 BA	3.4	1.8	2.6	5.3	6.1	5.7
20 GA	3.4	2.0	2.7	4.8	5.5	5.2
5 BA+5 GA[x]	3.2	1.8	2.5	5.6	6.0	5.8
10 BA+10 GA	3.1	1.5	2.3	5.8	6.1	6.0
20 BA+20 GA	3.6	1.6	2.6	4.9	6.7	5.8
30 BA+30 GA	3.3	1.6	2.5	5.1	6.5	5.8
50 BA+50 GA	4.1	1.9	3.0	4.2	5.7	5.0
2 Chrysal BVB	4.0	1.7	2.9	4.5	6.3	5.4

z Rating: 5-point scale from 1 = 0-10% to 5 = 76-100% wilt/discolor.
y All quantities are in ppm except Chrysal BVB which is in ml/liter.
x Combined BA+GA treatments were prepared with Fresco ® (contains equal amounts of BA and GA_{4+7}).



PONDering Water Lilies as a Cut Flower

Nathan Jahnke and John Dole
Department of Horticultural Science
North Carolina State University

Who among us has not sat on the edge of a garden pond filled with water lilies on a warm, sunny day and soaked in their luxuriousness? Who among us has not had the next thought, "I wonder how they would do as a cut flower?" Water lilies are not a common cut flower, but they are found now and again at wholesale houses or flower markets. Along with their striking, vibrant colors, some water lilies even have a great fragrance. You may be reluctant to try out this aquatic flower, but if you do, you are sure to have something unique to bring to market. We'll provide a few production details, and results from a postharvest experiment we conducted here at North Carolina State.

Production

Production may be one of the easiest aspects of this crop if you already have a pond. We harvested our flowers from a naturally-occurring pond. Where they came from, how old they were, nutrition, and variety were all unknown, but they were free and plentiful! If you have a pond at your home or farm, all you have to do is make sure the water level is high enough to have long stems. Harvest the bounty all summer long.

If you're interested in growing your own water lilies, you can start your crop using one of two methods. Purchase rhizomes from a big box store or online. Garden centers usually carry live plants throughout a typical growing season. Most will be selling hardy water lilies, which is what we used in our experiments. Avoid planting water lilies into an established natural ecosystem as they can spread rapidly. It is best to keep them contained in your own manmade pond or container.

Almost any container that holds water can be used. Depending on the scale you want to grow, a large washtub may support a plant or two. Plan for a water depth of 2 to 3 feet for long stems. Generally, the deeper you place your pots the longer your stems will be when the flowers are ready for harvest.

Water lilies are very easy to grow and maintain. If you purchase yours already potted, we recommend bumping up those plants to a larger container either right away or the following season. Shallow containers work best, but plants are not picky. From our experience, any clay-like soil or a mixture of sand, topsoil or clay works great. Stay away from peat and perlite, which will float out of the pot. Your pond or container should be in full sun. Fertilization is relatively easy. Purchase tablets of aquatic plant fertilizer online or from a garden center. Place one tablet into the soil near the crown of each plant when planting, and every month during the growing season. Depending on light levels and the age of plants, you will have multiple flowers in the first year, but plants will not start producing until the water temperatures are warm. Most hardy water lilies can be grown in Zones 4 to 11.

Overwintering can be done in place, if your pond is does not freeze solid. Otherwise, harvest rhizomes in the fall, wash off the soil, and put them in a cold dark place, surrounded with moist, not wet, sphagnum peat moss. Tropical water lilies have longer stems and come in a broader array of colors than hardy water lilies, but need to be kept at least 45F in the winter, which means that the tubers must be stored in protected areas for most of the U.S. and Canada.

Harvest

Harvesting stage can be tricky if you want to store or hold flowers for any length of time, but it is extremely important. Generally, most water lilies are open on the plant for 3 to 4 days, so you need to cut them at the right time to get maximum vase life. When buds are about to open, they will float on the surface of the water in the morning, and open as the sun rises. Many hardy water lilies are day bloomers, so they open in the early morning and close in the evening. Morning harvests will allow you to best identify new buds and flowers. Harvest at either stage 2, when buds have color showing between the sepals, or stage 3, when flowers are open their first day and have liquid in the bottom of the cup as seen in the title photo. See the diagram to identify bud stages for harvest and postharvest information based on results from our trials.

Flowers can be plucked from the rhizome by pulling, but stems may break or become flimsy. We recommend cutting the stems underwater. The photo on the top right shows our first beautiful harvest after we pulled the stems while sitting in kayaks. They were long, but very flimsy. Wearing waders and cutting stems produced a stronger, better quality stem. After harvest, keep the stems supported and as straight as possible.

Postharvest

We implemented our typical postharvest trial test with both buds and first-day flowers. Flowers were placed in either a hydrator solution or water for 4 hours, and then placed into water or a holding solution for 2 days. Flowers were then placed in tap water for vase life evaluation. Neither the hydrator nor holding solution improved vase life. Using a holding solution reduced vase life of both buds and first-day flowers. Buds did not open faster when a hydrator or holding solution was used.

In just water, first-day flowers lasted 4.2 ± 0.7 days. Buds opened in 2.0 ± 0.7 days with a vase life of 5.0 ± 0.7 days. Second-day flowers lasted on average 2.0 ± 0.4 days. We used a hardy water lily, which is most likely what you will encounter in natural ponds and at garden centers. They were day bloomers. After being cut, flowers generally opened between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m., and closed between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. Surprisingly, some flowers stayed open through the night. See photo below.

Recommendations

If water lilies are something you want to try, here are some recommendations based on our experiences:

1) Do your own vase life testing and determine when the flowers are going to open and close.
2) Harvest flowers when the sepals start to separate and show color.
3) Cut stems underwater and place into clean water.
4) Provide support when flowers are in buckets.
5) Do not use hydrator or holding solutions.

Water lily bud and flower stages			Harvest?	Vase life information
	1	Unopened flower bud, no color showing	NO	Buds that opened: 20% Vase life = 5.0 days
	2	Unopened flower, color showing between sepals	YES	Buds that opened = 100% Days to open = 2.0 ± 0.7 days Vase life = 5.0 ± 0.7 days
	3	First day flower, liquid in bottom of receptacle cup, no pollen	YES	Vase life = 4.2 ± 0.7 days
	4	Second day flower, little to no liquid, pollen present	MAYBE	Vase life = 2.0 ± 0.4 days
	5	Third day flower, no nectar, pollen present, slight browning of anthers	NO	-
	6	Fourth or later flower, blackening of anthers, flower may start to close or not open fully in the morning	NO	-
	7	Flowers are mostly closed, stem may have curled and pulled flower underwater	NO	-
	8	Flower is mostly closed and underwater, stem is curled	NO	-

The authors would like to thank Lisa Forehand for access to her home and pond, and Ingram McCall, Ben Bergmann, and Cristian Loyola for assistance with harvesting.

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WHAT'S NEXT: INDUSTRY PREDICTIONS FOR 2019

FORWARD-THINKING INDUSTRY LEADERS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES, CHANGES AND TRENDS FACING THE FLORAL INDUSTRY IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

By Christine Wright

It's been another wild, crazy and fascinating year in the floriculture industry. We've seen ground-breaking improvements in the science of flower farming and breeding, money- and time-saving evolutions in shipping and packaging ideas, and, perhaps, most of all, continued changes in how flowers are purchased and delivered.

According to the "U.S. Floral Gifting Market – Industry Outlook and Forecast 2018-2023," by Research and Markets, it's a rosy outlook for the industry. The report finds that the U.S. floral gifting market is expected to reach values of around $16 billion by 2023, climbing at an average rate of more than 6 percent each year.

So what's next in 2019? In our fast-paced constantly changing world, we asked industry leaders to give us their thoughts on what's next in the flower industry.

CHANGES COMING IN OUR INDUSTRY

Farbod Shoraka, co-founder and CEO of BloomNation, an online flower marketplace based in Santa Monica, Calif., predicts that we will see a lot of consolidation on the retail side and a clear movement into the "studio production" model. "There will be more and more florists who set up shop in a production studio with no retail presence, putting their entire focus into e-commerce. Cheaper rent, less overhead, less spoilage and more margins," Farbod says.

Alex Frost, founder of QuickFlora POS, a technology and marketing services provider for retail florists, based in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., says that continued improvements in the way perishable products from nontraditional companies (such as Amazon and direct shippers from outside the United States) are delivered are sure to open up new options for consumers.

Outsourcing and specialization are the most significant changes our industry will see in the next two to five years, according to Bisser Georgiev, founder and CEO of LiveTrends Design Group, a specialty plant décor company in Apopka, Fla. "I believe that each sector of the industry will become more specialized in one or two key areas. A company simply cannot be great at everything, and if it tries, it will deliver mediocre results. The future will belong to companies who will excel at one or two key areas and have the ability to coordinate global supply chains of key partners.

Diana Roy, flower farmer and creative director at Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers, says that how future style trends

come about and how they are influenced will be a big change. She feels that the major influencers will no longer be the big companies with the most advertising dollars. "It will be the smart, savvy, creative designers, retailers and farmers – or a group of them all – who aren't afraid to share their knowledge and unique products in every way possible who will be the influencers," Diana says.

CHALLENGES FACING OUR INDUSTRY

Challenges are a part of life. We all have them, and we all do our best to overcome them. Alex Frost says that one of the biggest challenges he sees is in the ability of retailers to deliver flower products the same day. He sees that smaller stores are not able to keep up with companies such as Amazon and Target and can be reluctant to change the way they have been doing business for decades.

"The traditional retail florist must embrace a new way of servicing retail customers with better and faster customer service and technology," Frost says.

The "U.S. Floral Gifting Market" report foresees that innovations in delivery models and leveraging digital platforms to attract more consumers will positively impact purchasing decisions and drive sales in the market. The demand for bouquets and DIY concepts will create new opportunities for leading vendors in the U.S. market, the report states.

On the import and wholesale side, Tim Dewey, vice president of procurement, quality and e-commerce at DVFlora, a wholesale supplier of cut flowers and supplies, based in Sewell, N.J., says that one of the major challenges is the lack of capacity available to transport product from South America to the United States. "What is needed is more freight capacity to transport flowers from these regions," Tim says. "Another option would be an increase in [the size of] shipping container volumes."

Farbod Shoraka sees that flowers are being replaced with other goods by companies like Amazon and Postmates, and this is a huge challenge in the industry overall. "Flowers used to be one of the only things you could have delivered the same day or next day, so they were the perfect last-minute gift," says Farbod. "Now consumers have a ton more options in terms of what they can have delivered in a matter of hours."

Bisser Georgiev acknowledges the challenges of transportation, politics, tariffs, labor rates, but he believes our industry's most important challenge is not fully understanding consumer behavior and demand. "We operate in the largest economy in the world with the highest income levels in years, and, yet, the consumption of flowers and plants is still lagging behind the rest of the world," he points out. "We all need to invest in finding out what exactly people want, when they want it and why they want it. This will lead to innovations that will make our products and services attractive to a much larger base. We need to refocus our strategies from "needs" to "wants," which deliver much more desirable products with emotional value, higher prices and better margins.

One important issue that is often overlooked in the U.S. is how flowers are perceived. "Flowers are considered by many as a gift item or something designed for special occasions, basically a daily nonessential," Diana says. This mind-set obviously has a big effect on sales, funding, lawmaking and every aspect of the industry. "Flowers bring joy to peoples' lives and make them happy. That message needs to be replayed over and over again," Diana continues.

SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL TRENDS

As for current societal and cultural trends and how they may affect the industry, Alex Frost says, "As fresh flowers become more of a lifestyle product, as they are in many European countries, the total market for flower consumption may double or triple in the next decade. People love flowers; they need better reasons – quality, price and convenience – to buy more flowers every week."

Farbod Shoraka agrees. "With the growth of social media, flowers will become more and more in fashion. People are sharing photos of their gifts and home décor more and more often, which often include flowers and plants. This exposure should drive our industry forward as long as we continue to push the design aesthetic forward."

Trends such as urbanization, smaller living spaces, renting and aging are driving the demand for smaller, long-lasting products, offers Bisser Georgiev. "At the same time, consumers' hyper-awareness of design, fashion and color trends are leading them to look for products that have a designer feel and look. The DIY is being replaced with MIY (make it yourself); it is much sexier, crafty and Instagrammable." Georgiev adds that e-commerce will continue to play a huge role in when and why people will buy floral. Convenience will replace low price, and innovation will replace efficiency, he projects.

Tim Dewey sees that with a boom in the economy and the transition of millennials back to the cities, coupled social media and other Internet marketing, we are seeing an increase

in interest in the floral and plant category. "Everyone I have spoken to in the last year at the wholesale level has mentioned the increase again in green plant sales."

And speaking of millennials, the industry is indeed facing a generational shift. According to a survey this year by *Greenhouse Grower,* many growers and retailers are retiring or closing their doors. In the survey, several say they'll be retiring in the next two to three years. Only about half of growers report that they have someone ready to take over for them, so we may see the shuttering of even more businesses by 2020.

MAJOR TRENDS

Farbod Shoraka says that preserved roses have exploded in popularity, and that fiddle-leaf fig (*Ficus lyrata*) plants have grown in admiration as many blogs and fashion/interior design magazines have pushed this plant onto consumers. "As far as hard goods," Farbod says, "we are seeing a lot of the hat-box designs as well as acrylic boxes."

Diana Roy believes that consumers are looking for new, unique and special flowers and foliage like *Proteas*, vines, branches, *Kalanchoes*, and new types of amaryllises and bulb flowers.

As far as plants, the terms "new" and "unusual" also apply for both houseplants and landscape plants. Exotic plants that are compact and easy to care for, and that are suitable to smaller spaces, will be in demand. Nurseries and garden centers will be offering a more extensive array of cacti, proteas and Australian wildflowers, especially in parts of the country where they can be grown in pots or in landscaping.

CONSUMER PURCHASING OPTIONS

Alex Frost feels that the advent of 24-hour intelligent automated kiosks linked to local delivery options for perishables will dramatically increase flower consumption in ways we can't imagine today. "These new types of kiosks will lower costs and increase quality for consumers across the board," he says.

Tim Dewey agrees. He finds that in the mass market, more people are making daily purchases of flowers. As flower shops evolve to a more millennial model, with younger owners who have new, fresh ideas, this will only increase. Mass-market outlets that do a good job with their floral programs will reap these rewards.

Farbod Shoraka foresees that consumers will make more and more purchases online, which will cause some florists to thrive (those who focus on their e-commerce now) and some to fail if they're too late to adapt.

"I see the new ways of purchasing as very positive," Diana Roy shares. She says that young consumers want quick and easy ways to purchase the items they're looking for. Online purchasing allows them to find what they want more easily and gets it to them or their chosen destination faster and fresher.

PURCHASING CHANNEL GROWTH

As the mass market begins to push further into arranged flowers, this will continue to erode advantages that local brick-and-mortar flower retailers have presently. It started with order gatherers by phone, moved online, and then expanded to overnight shipping, and now we will see the mass-market players leverage omnichannel retail to expand mass-market sales to levels unimaginable today.

"Remember, 30 years ago supermarkets sold zero flowers," Alex Frost points out. "Today, 23,000 outlets sell more than 6 billion stems a year. That number could quickly go to 10 or 15 billion, as all these factors converge at the right time."

Bisser Georgiev expects the most significant growth in 2019 will be in the mass-market segments. "Grocery retailers are becoming better and better with this category," he notes, "and many of them recognize the draw value of well-designed products that have instant draw effect on purchasing."

Farbod Shoraka predicts that online will have the strongest growth as consumers are shifting online at a macro level. He shares that BloomNation's model is built for this movement and its focus on e-commerce will empower the florists who leverage that platform.

Diana Roy believes that if we are creative, fun, computer savvy, and willing to constantly update and refresh, we can continue to develop a strong online platform that will draw wholesalers, retailers and consumers. "The sky is the limit," she says.

THE GROWTH IN ONLINE PURCHASING

Alex Frost notes that QuickFlora is seeing more and more clients merging their point-of-sale, website and inventory control systems to maximize sales and minimize waste. He believes this trend will only continue and put smaller retailers at a considerable disadvantage.

At BloomNation, online purchase growth has allowed the company to help more and more florists with their technology. They give local florists a custom-tailored e-commerce experience, powering independent websites, handling all their retention marketing (e.g., email marketing) as well as giving them new online revenue channels. "We are positioned to help grow all the local florists we power websites for," says Farbod Shoraka.

"The growth of online purchasing has had a big effect on our *Protea* sales," Diana Roy shares. She believes that despite Resendiz Brothers' consistent marketing efforts, there are still many wholesalers and florists throughout the U.S. who do not purchase proteas on a regular basis or consider them an inventory staple. When Resendiz Brothers gets calls from consumers who want to purchase proteas, there are often no outlets in the consumers' cities for Resendiz Brothers to recommend. "So, we created *TheProteaStore.com*, where consumers can purchase proteas online," Diana points out.

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THE EFFECT OF U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIES IN 2019

Economically in 2019, Bisser Georgiev says the consumer price index will continue to rise. "It's inevitable. The new tariffs on many packaging materials used in the floral industry will increase costs by around 20 percent," he suggests. "The cost of capital, transportation, and labor also are going up. All this leads to inflation and eventually to economic slowdown. Higher retail prices and a slower economy will lower demand for our products. The good news is that our industry generally does well in times of recession: We still offer an affordable luxury that people can enjoy in gloomy days."

Offering a slightly different opinion, Farbod Shoraka predicts that 2019 will be a strong, prosperous year. "I am highly optimistic that consumer spending will continue in a big way," he offers. "When it comes to the U.S. economy, if something does not change with labor and labor costs, farming will become more and more difficult," relates Diana Roy. That could mean higher wholesale and retail prices and, possibly, some less financially secure farms going out of business or being absorbed by competitors.

Internationally, Alex Frost predicts that the continued expansion of new growing regions, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, and improvements in ocean shipping will dramatically lower flower prices for consumers in the next decade. He notes that in 2017, there was one ocean container with fresh flowers from Colombia to Miami each week, and this year, there are 15 a week. This will only continue to rise due to the increases in air cargo shipping rates, and eventually, there may be hundreds of containers per week from China and Africa hitting the U.S. ports, Frost says.

EMERGING MARKETS

Alex Frost states that the flower market in China is growing dramatically and will soon exceed the U.S. flower market in size. "Growers without a presence or partnership in China will be at a significant disadvantage," he says. "Once the Chinese refine the cold-chain export process as it relates to ocean shipping, they will begin to dominate the world market for flower stems."

Farbod Shoraka adds that technology is enabling growers and manufacturers to sell direct more easily, which he says will become a bigger part of their businesses in the coming years.

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NORTHEAST

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Carolyn Snell
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Before we can make solid plans for 2019 we need to take a look at how 2018 treated us. I have been excited to add up columns and crunch numbers because even though throughout the season I have a general sense of what feels popular and what doesn't, and what we need to grow more or less of, I don't truly know how many dollars of calla lily stems we sold (and does that number exceed the cost of bulbs?) until we really dig through the data. Last year I sold more flowers to other designers than I ever have, and the crops that sold well to them were different than what appeals to my retail customers at farmers' market, so I will keep adjusting my crop plans to grow more of the right flowers for my market.

Comparing the actual sales of different products that are both beautiful and popular remind me of the scene in *Guys and Dolls* where Nathan Detroit wants to bet Sky Masterson $1000 about whether the diner where they are meeting sells more cheesecake or more streusel. Masterson refuses that bet because he suspects that Detroit has insider information. The great news for us flower growers is, of course, we can keep track of our own insider information to decide how best to place our bets. Each year is a new gamble, with the weather and consumer tastes as our variables. I was surprised to learn, for example, that our scabiosa crop yielded about twice as much income as our sweet pea crop. I perceive that people "care" way more about sweet peas, but that doesn't mean that I sell more of them, and it doesn't mean I should plant more of them either, just because they are so nostaligic.

In 2018 I kept more precise data than ever, and I am so glad that I did. It feels thrilling to learn that lisianthus is by far our most important crop, yielding about twice as much income as our anemone crop, which has our second place slot for solid bunches.

It is of course tricky to compare raw sales without also digging into enterprise budgets and costs of production, but it is useful to track demand and market value.

Our top 6 grossing products last year:

Lisianthus	13.20%
Mixed bouquets	13.07%
Anemone	6.89%
Eucalyptus	6.58%
Icelandic poppy	5.57%

Here are some crops we are dropping for 2019, or as I like to call it "Taking a break and seeing if we miss them."

Didiscus: Again we struggled with root problems, and we have decided to expand our scabiosa offerings rather than continue production of didiscus.

Agrostemma: I love this crop, but it is too fragile, the harvest window is too small, and it doesn't rebloom.

Gomphocarpus: I really like these weirdos, but with our expanded mum lineup and more and more eucalyptus joining our party, we aren't as hungry for weird stuff in the fall. Also the milky sap is a nuisance and the plants get so tall they disrupt our cultivation plans and sometimes fall into their neighbors' rows.

Ammi majus: We worry about the sap causing skin irritation, and lately we seem more excited about our daucus and wild Queen Anne's Lace.

Dutch iris: Our customers didn't value these beauties highly enough for us to bother planting and harvesting.

Lily, especially the strongly scented ones: We sold almost zero of these to designers, and consumers in our market seem fairly indifferent. I did order a few tiger style lilies before I made this decision, so we'll see how that goes. I hope the retro vibe of those might go over better.

Maybe we will miss these crops so much and add them back in future years, but for now I want to direct our time and attention to the crops that really pay. Also, I am very fortunate to farm within a community of flower growers, and I can generally get my hands on some of these beauties if I am suffering withdrawals.

Another exciting development last year for us was dried flower bouquets. We built a new barn that is suitable for drying and storing the bunches, so we were able to capture more of the harvest for later sales. People seem to have renewed interest in

everlastings, and we sold hundreds of mixed dried bouquets in paper sleeves.

I must admit that sometimes it makes me sad when people look at all of our lush floral offerings only to choose a bundle of statice and say, "This'll dry out, right?" Of course the statice is a durable choice, but I do wish they might instead ask "Will this dry beautifully?" or "Is this my longest-lasting option?" I think the message we should take away, though, is that people are valuing flowers more and more, but they also want to get more value (time) out of them. That tells me to plant more helichrysum, flamingo celosia, and feathertop grass.

Plans are starting to take shape for our "In the Thick of It" grower meeting up here in southern Maine on July 14th and 15th. The point of this event is to meet during a growing season when there are plants in the field and systems in our studios to take a look at. We are planning to tour my farm as well as Broadturn Farm in the next town over on Sunday, July 14th. We are also hoping to work in some visits to the trials at Johnny's Selected Seeds. Mark your calendars.

Happy scheming to you all!

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia

Lisa Ziegler
The Gardener's Workshop
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As I scroll through social media reading all the business endeavors connected to flower farming this region has going on, I think to myself "What an innovative group of folks!" From Jessica Hall shipping boxes of flowers and adding the manufacturing of flower frogs, to Laura Beth Resnick offering tours, photo shoots, and cutting garden plant sales on the farm, ASCFG members are both enormously talented and endlessly imaginative.

I can't help but think that flower farming creates such a doorway to other business opportunities. It seems as though it's like rooting around doing our everyday farming jobs and suddenly we flip a rock that reveals something else that also makes our hearts race. We just have to try it!

Both of these business examples are so smart—they are reaching out to offer more services to their customers. While we can never stop looking for new customers, it is far more cost effective and easier to sell more to existing customers.

The craft and tradition of growing are making comebacks. Locally-grown flowers and vegetables have become the buzz and our opportunities are endless. Homegrown offers such good stuff and people are drawn to it and want in on it.

A big part of these type of business adventures is this: you must have the guts to take the leap to pursue the idea! This, I find to be perhaps the wall that stops many. I would suggest that some of the best ideas never get off the ground because of the fear of failure. The most valuable lessons are learned from our failures. Think Nike: just do it!

The most successful business ideas grow out of serving a need and solving a problem. There are so many people that want to learn everything about growing, period. And then what to do with it after it's grown!

The fact that you are a member of this organization means you've already taken a leap into flower farming. If you have another business idea that piggybacks on flower farming that you have been afraid to try, push aside the fear of failure and pursue it!

Taking time to explore other flower farmers websites to see what they are doing, it can be a really eye opener. Check out these gals' websites: hhfshop.com and butterbeefarm.com

SOUTHEAST

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Val Schirmer
Three Toads Farm
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Hopes and Dreams for 2019

"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes.

Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something.

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself.

Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do It.

Make your mistakes, next year and forever."

- Neil Gaiman

One of the most glorious mistakes I've made was the first time we tried forcing Oriental lilies for Christmas sales. Plants did well, set plenty of great buds — and then they all turned brown and fell off. That's how we learned about lighting!

When I came across this inspiration last year from a source I no longer recall, I kept it close to me, both as a kick in the pants and as a reminder that it's not only okay to make mistakes—it's essential to the journey of life.

As I considered what to write about for this issue's column, I kept coming back to these words as a framework for looking ahead, for hopes and dreams for 2019 and beyond. If you believe in the power of mistakes, I hope you keep reading.

When it comes to flower farming, how do we figure out what to try next? For me, I like to see what others are doing, that I dare to hope that I might try. That's why I continue to go to workshops and conferences and, this time of year, I find myself devouring all things related to trends. It's one way to look into the crystal ball, and then imagine.

The ASCFG's 30th anniversary conference in Raleigh was a treasure trove for that! One of my favorite presentations was Debra Prinzing's "Floral Design Trends" session—I couldn't take notes fast enough. What she shared opened my eyes to small and great leaps I could make in our little flower-farmer business, Three Toads Farm.

I'd like to share some highlights of her presentation, in case you didn't go to Raleigh, or if you did, just as a reminder of some things to think about as we get ready to dig in to 2019. I hope I haven't gone too far away from Debra's messages and ask you to please take a look at her slides and especially the video of her talk, so that you get her full message and can form your own ideas. There is a treasure trove of insights and inspiration, plus GREAT examples!

Debra's over-arching theme: Defining the New Normal. Here's a list of her top ten insights to watch for and adopt. Don't feel overwhelmed; pick and choose what might work best for your unique situation.

1. EXPERIENCES. Not Conveniences.
People are *hungry* for experiences and are more than willing to pay for them. Consider on-the-farm workshops, events and tours as the best way to connect people with you, your farm, and your flowers. This might sound pretty basic to anyone already doing workshops. But it made me think about how we can add more of "the experience" to what we're doing, and how we can incorporate more of the "experience" aspect into our marketing of these events.

2. ARTISAN. Not Mass Production.
Flowers are becoming fashion statements; just look at *Vogue* magazine's recent covers. Consider handcrafted, one-of-a-kind jewelry, foraged wreaths (she had photos of amazing examples inspired by "Game of Thrones"). Present your offerings as curated collections, which people see as much more artisanal, hence, valuable.

3. FLORAL EXPRESSION. Not Floral Arrangements.
This is about using uncommon, even sensory, ingredients, such as the beautiful example she shared of Ariella Chezar's "The Blueberry Factor" (which, by the way, is to die for) to set the mood. Consider seasonality and sense of place, such as the fifth season between summer and fall, as a unique opportunity for your floral expressions to tell a story and fill a void between the seasons.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL. Not Synthetic.
People are fascinated with *how flowers grow*, and this is our opportunity to give them highly-desired access to our flower farming and design process. Under "access and process" she said that plants at all stages fascinate and provide another way to sell/brand/market what we do. This gave me the thought of having flats of sweet pea starts in tall pots for the high-end antiques and garden show we participate in every March. Floral tourism and you-picks bring your customers and followers behind the scenes (don't worry that your growing space is not pretty enough!). People are drawn to the good, the bad, and the reality.

5. VERTICAL. Not Silo or Compartmentalized.
Sell to yourself; be your own source of florals. I think we're already seeing this in the number of florists who are becoming growers and joining the ASCFG. Extend this thought a bit more and it gets you to what Heidi and Molly of Field & Florist have done by going beyond their rural flower farm and adding their urban floral boutique in Chicago. There are also crossover markets, such as a flower bar and a brew pub; plant-based textiles, ribbons and accents; and botanical brand extensions (think of Gretel Adam's handmade soaps, and even our Mrs. Toad's Simply Divine Gourmet Jams & Jellies). People dig it.

6. RELATIONAL. Not Transactional.
This is all about making meaningful, authentic, community-focused connections that speak to your followers. Debra had a great quote from Seth Godin, "People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories, and magic." A great example of this trend is to highlight "Meet the Farmer" as part of a farmer-florist design workshop.

7. PLANTED. Not Faux or Disconnected from Nature.
This one is right up our alleys! There's an interior plant craze going on among millennials, and there's a booming force of plant geeks out there who are mesmerized by what we do and grow. She shared an article in the *Los Angeles Times* that began with, "They don't own homes. They don't have kids. Why millennials are plant addicts." Debra's advice to us: grow and propagate more cacti, succulents, begonias, and even tropicals to feed their thirst. Okay, and make new money too.

8. TRANSPARENT. Not Obscured.
This is all about minimal/minimized/open floral design as a trend. Examples include gift posies (instead of big arrangements), see-through arrangements (they always stop me in my tracks), and collections of lots of tiny vases with individual stems.

9. MULTISEASONAL. Not Single Use.
The quote from Charles Little, of Charles Little & Co. in Oregon, sums it up perfectly. "I love the things that give you two or three opportunities to harvest. Whether it's the flower in the spring or the pod in the fall, it's always great to have some kind of backup plan for a flower." Great advice. I think it even applies to the containers we use at Three Toads for our holiday and spring bulb gardens, which are pretty expensive. When I explain that the container is great to reuse with primroses, succulents or loaded with little ferns, the now-a-customer falls in love with the idea.

10. COMMUNITY. Not Solitary.
Collaborations and local flower collectives are growing and getting stronger. Pop-ups and makers' markets are becoming much more prevalent (and people love them). Then there are shared resources, co-farming and even an example of floral cross promotion with Flirty Flowers and Longfield Gardens. This is an interesting idea where Longfield has created custom bulb collections with Alicia at Flirty Flowers, using beautiful photos of her arrangements made from the flowers in those collections to help sell the bulbs. This might seem like something that's far from possible for lots of us, but what if you take this trend and localize it? What if you approached a great nursery in your area and suggest a similar idea? You could do your own, scaled down version of Flirty Flowers + Longfield Gardens, with plants, seeds, bulbs or a combination.

I hope I've been able to give you a few ideas and insights to think about for 2019, and even beyond. Please take a look at Debra's video and slides (she also had two bonus themes that I haven't even gone in to) to really get the creative juices flowing! In fact, take an afternoon and go through all of the videos from the Raleigh Conference and Growers' School.

Let's make a pact to try to incorporate some of these trends into our planning for 2019. Even better, let's make a pact to do things we've never done before—whether it's about getting started, getting bigger, scaling back or just doing something differently—and let's agree to make some big, glorious mistakes. Well, just a few anyway.

Hope to see you this year!

"I love the things that give you two or three opportunities to harvest. Whether it's the flower in the spring or the pod in the fall, it's always great to have some kind of backup plan for a flower."

Charles Little

NORTH AND CENTRAL

Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Jamie Rohda
Harvest Home
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I hope you all are ready to head into the new year with rested bodies, renewed focus, and a determination to make 2019 your best year ever! Which makes me ask myself, what would make it my best year ever? Does that mean growing more flowers than ever? Contacting and acquiring a certain number of new accounts? Having more free time? Showing the largest profit ever? Growing the most dahlias we've ever grown and having no bugs chew on them? That right there would be a miracle!

Success can show up in many forms and I hope you can each take some time and figure out what that looks like for you and your farm. This time last year I had many goals in my head for the coming season. I'm not one that usually writes them down (I think it's that fear of failure!), but I had them rattling around in my brain.

Until we get that miracle, here is how we get perfect blooms.

The beautiful bride!

I had a new employee joining us, and after a whirlwind early spring planning for our daughter's wedding, I thought we would be ready to move into our best season ever. Unfortunately, the week after our daughter's wedding we got the news that our oldest daughter's cancer had returned and she would be undergoing chemo and a stem cell transplant over the summer and fall months. This wasn't part of my plans.

My priorities quickly changed and our focus turned to helping our daughter, her husband, and their two precious little girls get through this difficult time. Flowers no longer seemed so important. We notified all of our customers that our season might look a bit different than we'd planned and asked for understanding and patience.

So many spring flowers bloomed just in time for the wedding.

I've got to say, we have the best customers ever. The outpouring of understanding and support was amazing, and we feel truly blessed to have them not only as customers but friends. I can't say that the summer was easy but we, and most importantly our daughter, made it through and she is enjoying a healthy life again. I also now have renewed respect and admiration for those of you doing this while raising a family. I'd totally forgotten what it's like to do this with a two-year-old!

I think the trials of last year helped us to stay focused on streamlining our business. We didn't really have time to try anything new even if we'd wanted to. I love new ideas and can

be sidetracked pretty easily by things that aren't on my list of goals for our farm. This flower farming community is such a creative bunch and seeing you all doing so many amazing things can sometimes make it difficult to stay on track.

For 20 years we participated in a local farmers' market and we tried so many things it makes my head spin thinking of all of them. When we quit doing markets after the 2015 season we decided to put all of our efforts into growing our flower route, delivering to florists and designers. We had finally decided that that was the market we wanted to be in and we've said no to every other opportunity since then. If you're just starting your business I'd say go for it; try several options to see what works for you, your family, and your farm in your market area. Maybe that will mean multiple sales outlets and diversifying into many channels. The key is finding what works for you, and nobody can tell you what that is, you've got to discover it for yourself.

A late fall visit to the market booth of our ASCFG Mentees, Matt and Amanda Cook.

And as you're considering what works best for you and your farm, don't forget to invest in your business. We all invest a lot of time working, and money on equipment and supplies, that's a given, but don't forget the investment in learning. 2019 will be a great year for that with four ASCFG grower meetings spread across the nation. I plan to be at the Denver event and the ones in St. Louis, Nashville, and Portland, Maine also look to be amazing learning opportunities.

And whether you're a beginner or a seasoned grower, please consider looking into the mentoring program that the ASCFG offers. It's an amazing service with great benefits for all involved. If you've got some experience under your belt, please consider passing it on to a new grower by being a Mentor, and if you're just beginning and could use some advice, apply to be a Mentee. As a past Mentor I can say that it was one of the most rewarding things that we've done with our business. Our Mentees, Matt and Amanda have become treasured, lifelong friends.

Best of luck to you all as we start another beautiful, flower-filled year!!

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Dahlia Tuber Care in a Dry Climate

While I really want to write about business topics in this issue—because winter is all about refining our business practices while we have the time to learn new skills and make major overhauls—I am saving all of that for "The Business of Flower Farming" meeting in Denver in February. Just two days could fill your head so full and (if implemented) make your business so smooth and profitable, that really you can't afford to miss it. I hope to see lots of you there!

So, in the meantime, I am going to do a complete 180 and just get super focused and nerdy on dividing and storing dahlias. While I know most of you are already pros at this, and I feel a little sheepish sharing my own process, I have to admit I struggled for a number of years with successfully storing my tubers. I had so many years of lost tubers and lost income and missing out on ordering new ones because I thought the one I had were good and accounted for. I also wanted to share a few tools we use to make the process much quicker.

It's All About the Weather

One thing I heard at the ASCFG Conference in Raleigh (I can't remember who said it, but I'm thinking maybe it was Stanton Gill talking about IPM) and it is so true: in farming, it's all about the weather. While I am so grateful for the internet age and all the available information on farming, our unique and very dry climate makes a lot of things not so transferable from other regions. So when I develop a good practice, especially one for the Southwest climate, I like to share it widely.

Every flower farmer I know does this process of caring for their dahlia tubers a bit differently, so I am just sharing what works for best for us. Some of this I learned through trial and error, and some was sage advice shared by Calvin at Arrowhead Dahlias in Colorado, where they are also in an arid western climate. All the dahlias I have ever purchased from Arrowhead have come in looking amazing, firm with nice visible eyes.

For reference we are in Zone 7; it is the desert, but at high elevation, which means really big temperature swings from day to night, and plenty cold in winter. If you live in a warmer climate you can leave the tubers in the ground. But if you live where the ground freezes you need to dig them up and store them where they won't freeze. The added benefit to digging them up is that one tuber becomes a clump of tubers, which means you can divide and multiply your stock to get more dahlias each year.

The Process

After a few frosts in the fall, we cut the plants back to about 6" off the ground. We usually do this with loppers or pruners, which is tedious, but this year we tried cutting them back with the flail mower. It didn't work perfectly, but it was good enough and definitely faster. Then we run the tractor with an undercutter blade on the back down the whole row. Now, this works perfectly. It is way faster and easier on your back than a digging fork, but it depends on your scale and what tools you have at your disposal. Our undercutter is homemade, but I saw some available on www.marketfarm.com.

Next, we pull up the large clumps of tubers and spray them vigorously to get all the dirt off. We then divide those clumps into either individual tubers or clusters of tubers (more or less quartering the clump) depending on the size of the clumps and ease of division. The dividing is actually quite a particular process as each tuber must be attached to an "eye" like the eye on a potato, which is where the sprouts will emerge. But in the case of dahlias, the eyes are close to the stem and getting the most tubers with eyes attached can be quite the puzzle. Many tubers break off without an eye, or are just located on the plant in such a way that they don't have eyes near them. Also on some varieties the eyes are less obvious than on others. It is mentally challenging and pretty satisfying work, but it is also cold and wet and tedious. And there are so many to divide. There are tons of great tutorials already out there online for how to divide dahlias that I won't go into the process in depth here.

The Storage

One thing we do differently than a lot of other folks I know is we dig, wash, divide, and pack for storage as much as we can do all in the same day (or dig and wash one day, and divide and pack away the next). Then we just keep repeating the process. Other people often dig all their tubers at once and then store them for a few months in a protected area before they start dividing. In our dry climate, I find that our tubers shrivel out within a few days, especially if left in a warm, sunny place like a greenhouse. We do it in small chunks so the tubers are not left out more than one or two days. Once divided, we pack our tubers into cedar shavings and store them in large plastic bags, in bulb crates, in our root cellar. In wetter climates, plastic bags would probably be a big no-no as things would stay too moist and create mold and rot. Just like in all of farming, it is a big lesson in finding out what works for you, the never-ending trial and error. Don't reinvent the wheel, but also don't get too stuck on how other people do it when it doesn't work for you.

The Lessons Learned

We got all 50 varieties of our dahlia tubers divided by the end of November last year and ended up with about 5,000 clusters for planting this spring. They are stored safely in our root cellar, but I still like to check on them about once a month and make sure no disasters are happening. Now, that number is not counting the 20 or so varieties that we hurriedly got out of the ground when I was worried about some super cold nights in the forecast. After we dug the remainder of the field (way more than the usual amount for one day) we washed them all and set them overnight in our uninsulated barn. When I went out to start dividing in the morning, they were all frozen solid and eventually ended up on the compost heap. Uggghhh, so frustrating.

I could have put them in the walk-in. Or put a space heater in the barn for one night. Or left them in the field for a few more days. So many alternate realities I could play out in my mind. But, instead I will be buying more (and begging some friends) for some replacements for 2019. Nothing is ever safe from the farmer's mistakes.

Wishing you all the best in the season of acquiring new dahlia tubers - it's a jungle out there!

WEST AND NORTHWEST

Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington

Erin McMullen
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First, a huge thanks to Lennie Larkin, our outgoing West and Northwest Regional Director. Both a wonderful grower and a steadfast leader, they are some big shoes that she has left to fill, and she knows I'll be calling with questions and asking for guidance.

When we started farming 20 years ago, it was just a fun thing to do to help fund travel and vacations. We never could have guessed that it would turn into a passion, an obsession, a livelihood. But, here we are. If 20 years ago you had told me that I'd be a mom to three, happily spending most of my days at home and not out socializing, I would have laughed at you and written you off as a few bulbs short of a crate. But, here we are. Life has a way of taking you down the path, and it's not until you've hiked a while do you realize it's a whole different path than you expected, and you wouldn't change a thing.

Our path into the world of cut flowers isn't uncommon. We started as veggie farmers and quickly realized that we weren't set up to compete with the big vegetable farmers in our area, nor did we want to. Flowers became my obsession and I slowly roped my new husband into tolerating and eventually embracing the thought of being flower farmers. We exhaustively sought out every species of flower that we could grow in our climate, all the while feeling like we were pioneers in some wide new world of farming flowers. We had no idea that there were others out there just like us.

Fast forward 15 years, a mortgage and 2 kids later, and I happened to stumble upon an article in *Growing for Market* about cut flower farming. Wait, what? There are other people doing this? As a new mom, recently home full time, the idea of turning what had until this point been a hobby into a full-fledged career path was just too much. I made myself a secret goal that by the time my younger son started kindergarten I would grow my farm to a point that I wouldn't have to go back to work off the farm.

Around that time I became aware of the ASCFG and started plotting to become a member. I had never paid a membership for anything, besides a gym, but took the plunge. I scoured the online forums, developing total farm crushes on the people whose experience and opinions were shared there.

Before my plane even left the ground in Seattle I had already spied two of my farm crushes, on my plane! Only rows away from me! In a totally uncharacteristic move, I stopped in the aisle of the airplane and introduced myself, and that is the moment that I fell in love with the flower community.

Then I registered for my first ASCFG conference. I felt like an awkward teenager going to my first dance. Before my plane even left the ground in Seattle I had already spied two of my farm crushes, on my

plane! Only rows away from me! In a totally uncharacteristic move, I stopped in the aisle of the airplane and introduced myself, and that is the moment that I fell in love with the flower community. I had walked onto that plane feeling alone, nervous, and out of place, but these two women embraced my enthusiasm and invited me to share a ride to the hotel, and later a drink and chat. Totally unprepared I had walked into a conference full of the most generous, kind, and knowledgeable people. I met so many wonderful people over those two days, and made countless connections. Priceless connections which have allowed both my farm and me to blossom and grow into a full-fledged career for me, my husband, and our employees. We now farm on seven acres in our valley and supply flowers to wholesale markets in Portland and Seattle, as well as our local markets, grocery, and wedding work.

As we've walked down this path I cannot thank the ASCFG and all of my fellow flower farmers enough for the community and collaboration that we've enjoyed. We are looking forward to the 2019 season, to continue to grow and learn alongside our friends, and our family, including our newest little blossom, our daughter Beatrice!

I am so excited to get to share my experiences as well as those of the super talented farms that are thriving here in the West and Northwest Region. We can learn so much from each other, and I'm honored to get a chance to help to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and support as a part of the ASCFG!

CANADA

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan

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Building Bridges

I was invited to Prince Edward Island to make some presentations at the ACORN (Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network) Conference about flower farming. It was a great chance to get away from my farm and meet new friends in this industry. The keynote speaker was Joel Salatin from Polyface Farm in Virginia. I have seen the documentaries he has been in and read his books but I was really impressed that his keynote address didn't include much information about actually farming. He used the conference title "Building Bridges" as his metaphor; bridges with other businesses, people, and community. Too often we are so focused on our little bubble. It is hard for farmers to ask for help or bring someone in.

During the winter months you can think about bridges you can build between businesses in your community. Be creative, think outside the box, how can you work with others? Approach your local cool, hip coffee or espresso bar and ask them about having your flower bouquets for sale at their location. We teamed up the local espresso bar. Our tulips came on before our farmers' market opened. We could have dry stored the tulips but we ended up selling them from the espresso bar. My Dad build a bucket stand and I was delivering daily. I would post on Instagram and Facebook letting our followers know that I had been in and they would venture down for a latte and some flowers! It was a win/win for both of us! They also would save the espresso pucks for us to use in our compost. They were thrilled that more customers were coming in and I enjoyed my daily latte and visit with the baristas.

Another great bridge, if you do weddings, is with wedding venues. A new venue opened near us and we have partnered with them to offer flowers as part of the couple's wedding package. We have it streamlined that we do x number of bud vases per eight-foot table, a decoration for the arbour, and hanging flowers for the altar. We design with the couple's colour palette in mind. The setup is the same for each wedding so we know what we are doing—it is quick and easy.

We are partnering with this venue to have a booth at a large local wedding show. By occupying the space together, we are splitting the cost of the space but still getting the same exposure as other vendors, but I'm paying half the cost.

This winter we also hosted our winter wreath workshops at this venue. It is a beautiful setting. The wood fire was burning and there was warm tea to drink. We split the revenue from the workshop 70/30. The venue did the ticketing, collection of funds, and remitting the taxes. We both did the advertising. Our advertised posts reached my followers as well as hers. When participants arrived many of my customers had never been to their farm and hers had never met me. They have a small on-farm shop that sells their teas and honey so she had some sales that day too. We both ended up very happy with the events.

You definitely want to bridge with local photographers! It is invaluable to have professionally photographed photos of flowers that you have grown and designed. At a Floret workshop Erin Benzakein talked about the need for high quality photos to tell your story in all media forms (print or digital). Right after the workshop we hired a local photographer we met through a styled photoshoot. We clicked right away. Kayleigh came out once per season that year to capture images of our farm and family. They are some of my most treasured photos. She has a wonderful way with our kids—she could get them to respond in ways that I couldn't. This was two years ago, but I still regularly use her photos in our posts. In 2018 she came to the farm to capture images of the Master Flower Farmer Course that Jennie Love taught. The participants received stunning images they can use to advertise their work. Kayleigh will be coming out in 2019 to take more photos for us. The kids are growing and changing too fast. The business photos double as priceless family photos.

Community over competition attitude is essential. Florists, farmers, and farmer-florists all have a space. How you look at the relationship will determine your success. Once you find a local florist who understands the amazing qualities of locally-grown and seasonal flowers, he or she will look to you for the best you can grow. At an event last spring, I met a local florist I had been following on Instagram for a while. Her business does many large weddings and day-to-day arrangements. I invited her to the farm to see what we do. That evening was so fun. We walked through the fields and she was in awe the whole time.

We made a deal that night that each week her delivery truck would come and pick up x number of buckets of the best stems we had. She didn't care what, just the best we had. Each week she would post a clip on her Instagram saying how happy she was with the flowers she had received from us. She decided that Wednesdays were her favourite day because Harris Flower Farm flowers arrived. The original standing bucket order increased often because she would see something on my social media that we said we had and she wanted some of it. It has been a great relationship. I don't do many florist sales but she is my ideal customer!

Build bridges with your neighbours. Luckily, I have lived in the same 5 km radius all my life except when I went away to school. This summer I designed a wedding for a neighbour's daughter. I babysat the bride many years ago. Even in an urban setting you need to be able to rely on your neighbours. You need them to watch over your flowers and property when you are not around. We have called on our neighbours to spread manure or disc up a field that is too large for our equipment. My Dad and the neighbour bought a post hole auger together. It's a piece of equipment that you don't use often but when you want to put up a new fence it's nice to have. If it's not at Dad's then it's at the neighbour's farm. The neighbour boy looks after our kids on Saturday mornings when my husband and I are at the market. Not recently (thankfully) but in the past they have helped with escaped heifers and teaching a new puppy its boundaries. They are also our biggest cheerleaders! They are always telling their friends about us. If they have any

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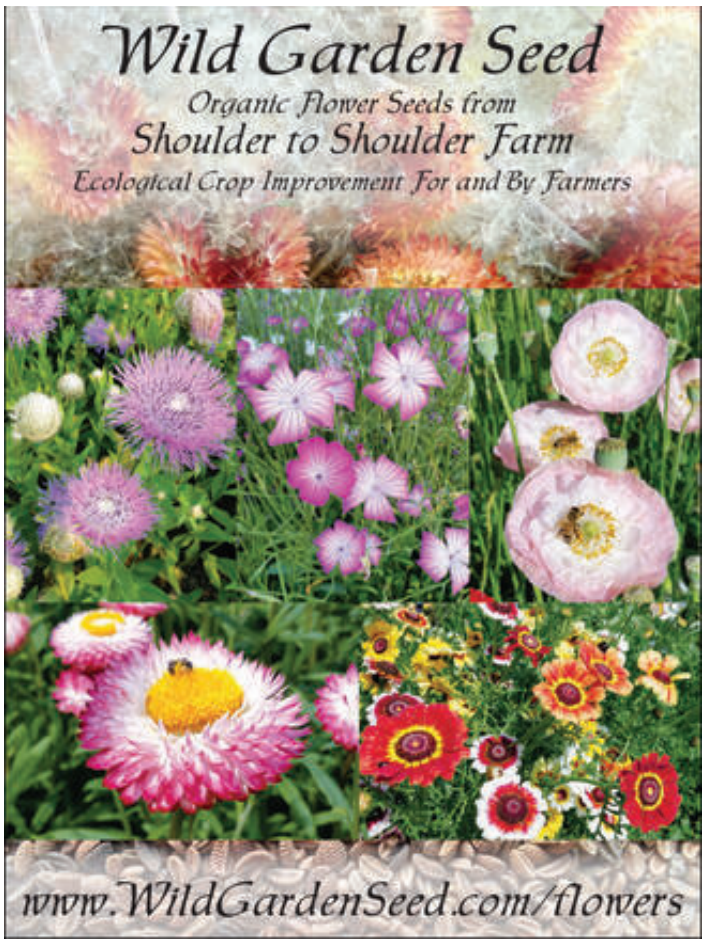

event suitable for flowers they know where to come. It is a great relationship. Sometimes payment is dollars, sometimes it's flowers or meat. But we know that we are all looking out for our community. We can count on them for more than just a cup of sugar.

Get to know your suppliers. You need them when you are looking for that super popular seed or when the plastic needs to be changed on the hoophouse before the snow flies. Make an effort to get to know them and show gratitude when they go the extra mile for you. While I was in Prince Edward Island, I was able to meet with our tulip bulb supplier. He picked me up at the hotel and took me to the farm to show me their operation. It was great to finally put a face to the voice and emails. I was amazed with their facility and so lucky to get a backstage tour of the operation. We were able to talk about our relationship and how we can both benefit the most from working together. Even though we just planted thousands of bulbs I can't wait for next year's orders!

The last bridge to think about building is with other local growers. This can be a difficult one to build mostly because ego can get in the way. No matter how confident you are in your place, when you find out about a new grower in your area it can be somewhat unnerving. Are they going to be your biggest competition? Will they take your customers? How can they do what I do? It's a hard one to be okay with. But have the conversations. Being honest with each other is best. What are your intentions? Do you grow really great lisianthus but you really hate growing glads? Maybe they really love growing glads? You never know when you might need them or they need you. Be open to the conversation. It may turn out to be a good thing and not the horrible situation you imagine. There are many co-ops and groups forming to make it easier for the customer to get local flowers. The more that we show the florists and other parts of our industry that growers can work together the more they will realize that it is only a positive thing for all.

I encourage you to take some time to think about the bridges that you have built and ones that you can work on. There is no "I" in team. Who is part of your team?

Meet the ASCFG's Newest Members

Jennifer Albanese, Pig & Leaf Farm, Summertown, TN
Mary Alford, Alive and Digginit, Rockford, TN
Kevin Anton, Eddy Farm, Bristol, CT
Andrea Baird, Painted Bloom Farm, Twin Falls, ID
Adrienne Bashista, Passalongs, Florence, MA
Jason Berlin, Arthur Place Farm, Bellevue, KY
Hannah Berisford, Botanigal, Westminster, MD
Miranda Bowman, Wildrye Farm, Bellingham, WA
Lisa Buhrmaster, Buhrmaster Fruit and Produce, Inc., Glenville, NY
Georgia Carr, Dixie Dels Cut Flower Farm, Kennewick, WA
Mary Louise Carter, Tiger Lily Flower Farm, Little Mountain, SC
Liberty Cheney, About Bloomin Time, Cibolo, TX
Mary Ashley Clark, Appalachia Blooms, Brevard, NC
Erla Click, Pagoda House Peonies, Greenwood, IN
Hubert D. Clopp, Trotwood Acres Farm, Westfield, MA
Jean Conner, St. Louis, MO
Carol Conrad, CC Blooms, Lebanon, OH
Liana Cousins, Bayside, NB
Lisa DesJardins, Utica, OH
Allison Doares-Sykora, Callie Weddings, Greenwood, SC
Joy Dowden, Joyful Heart Flower Farm, Robeline, LA
Erin DuMont, Brown Dog Fahm, Newburgh, ME
Sydney Duncan, Rivers & Roots, Sevierville, TN
Rose Dykstra, The Front Yard Flower Co., Vancouver, BC
Samantha Eberhardt, Cassiopeia Farm, Austin, TX
Cindy Edelbrock, Morrow, OH
John and Kate Edelen, Wild Card Farm, Virginia Beach, VA
Kristen Ehringer, Clarksville, IN
Mary Emerson, Gorham, ME
Kate Formichella, Flora Chella Design, Orleans, MA
Patty Forster, Moonlight Petals, Wake Forest, NC
Amanda Galano, Kennett Square, PA
Alexis Genho, Floral Woods Farm, Preston, ID
Sheilah Graham, Fred C. Gloeckner & Co., Wadsworth, OH
Rodney Griffin, 6G Heritage Farm, Lexington, TX
Heather Griffiths, Wasatch Blooms, Salt Lake City, UT
František Haba, Loukykvet, Msecke Zehrovice, Czechoslovakia
Lori Hernandez, Three Acre Farm, Byron Center, MI
Stefanie Hofmeister, Colorado Flower Collective, Lakewood, CO
Marissa Hollinger, Magnolia Spring Farm, Canton, OH
Maureen HorneBrine, Far North Farm, Anchorage, AK
Elizabeth Huff, Aylem Farm, Decatur, IN
Betsy Jackson, Anderson Acres Farm, Kent, CT
Hanna Jenkins, Tapalou Guilds, Guilford, VT
Kimberly Johannson, Twisted Willow, Collinsville, OK
Dusty Johnson, Blooms at Ledford Branch, Blairsville, GA
Amy Kafka, Garden Sweet, Fort Collins, CO
Molly Kennedy, Bloom Where You're Planted, Knob Noster, MO
Jessica L. Kidwell, Floral Fox Farm, Nicholasville, KY
Karyn Kistner, Salem, OR
Erin and Rodney Krauter, Odonata Flower Farm, Warren, OR
Melissa Law, Bumbleroot Organic Farm, Windham, ME
Lindsay Lidge, Reverie Farms, Boulder, CO
Margot Livingston, Pilesgrove, NJ
Cyndi Long, Thorncliffe Blooms Flower Farm, Kitchener, ON
Angela Longhurst, Lark Flower Farm, Perry, KS
Diane Madden, Casa Verde Flower Farm, Kelowna, BC
Sarah Mansmann, Little Mingo, Eighty Four, PA
Jennifer Marks, TradeMarks Farm, Clifton Springs, NY
Caroline Martin, Wild Moon Flowers, Santa Cruz, CA
Wendy Mason, Madison, GA
Tarra Mathews, Draper, SD
Howard Maurer, Newbury, NH
Krista McCallum, Pick This Farm & Studio, Newberg, OR
Courtney Mellblom, Farmermaid Flowers, Atascadero, CA
Stephanie Miller, Great Growins, Westfield, IN
Ken Mix, Meekestead Farm, Carthage, NY
Becca and Tom Monroe, West Mill Flower, Raymond, NE
Brandi T. Morris, Sky Blue Flower Farm, Hawkinsville, GA
Sharon Morrissey, Friday Harbor, WA
Reagan Mountain, The Faraway Gardens, Franklinton, NC
Gaia Nesvacil, Traverse City, MI
Maggie Nesciur, Frankie Sinn, Bronx, NY
Kerry Noonan, Lander, WY
Rita O'Brien, R&R Secret Farm, Athens, GA
Leah Ornellas, Kauai Flower Farm, Kapaa, HI
Julie Owen, Keeling, VA
Lora Porter, Lavender Wynde, Harvest, AL
Audrey Posl, Dry Creek Flowers, Healdsburg, CA
Carol Pratt, Sugar Grove Farm, Masonville, CO
Adrianne Roach, Owls Nest Garden, Piketon, OH
Sarah Robinson, Spring Time Farm, Everson, WA
Robin Ruether, W. Atlee Burpee Co., Warminster, PA
Christine Saenz, Bombus Botanics, Denver, CO
Elizabeth Sargent, Island Meadow Farms, Elgin, NB
Lara Schroeder, Lara Schroeder Landscape Gardener, Millerton, NY
Amanda Seely, Laughin' Gal Floral, Aromas, CA
Elizabeth Seymour, Mountain Prairie Farm, Whitefish, MT
Susan Sharp, Open Sky Organic Farm, Pellston, MI
Tricia Sharpe, Catkin Forest Farm, Galiano Island, BC
Laura Shubert, Laura Shubert Gardening, Las Vegas, NM
Amy Simon, SCOFF, East Sparta, OH
Helen Skiba, Farmette Flowers, Niwot, CO
Aliana Slot, Urban Farm Girl & Co., Burnaby, BC

Heather Staten, Heather's Flower Farm, Hood River, OR
Jeri Stewart, DaisyHill Farm Flowers, Brush Prairie, WA
Margaret Stokes, Flowers Local, Memphis, TN
Elizabeth Thompson, Ammon, ID
Kathy Tillson, Milburt Farm and Greenhouse, Galway, NY
Catherine Traffis, Dottie's Flower Farm, Lyndhurst, OH
Sarah Turkus, Osamequin Farm, Seekonk, MA
Abbey Vanderlin, Sunken Meadow Flower Farm, Williamsport, PA
Jason Veil, OSU Secrest Aboretum, Wooster, OH
Dorene Villwock, Garden Studio, Berrien Springs, MI
Brenda Visser, Flowers of the Field, Augusta, ON
Lindsey Waddoups, Three Sprouts Flower Farm, Farmington, UT
Carmen Winquist, Bellingham, WA
Tracy Zeiset, Country Joy Flowers, Elizabethtown, PA
Shelly A. Zollinger, Flourish Flower Farm, Brigham City, UT

Plan for These Meetings!

Portland, Maine
Sunday, July 14 and Monday, July 15
In the Thick of It

In the heat of the summer, head to cool southern Maine to visit Snell Family Farm and Broadturn Farm, both shining examples of conscientious and successful flower production. This will be your chance to see active fields of cut flowers, not just pictures in a PowerPoint presentation. We may even include an on-your-own tour of Johnny's Selected Seeds—stayed tuned!

Broadturn Farm

Snell Family Farm

Green Door Gourmet

Nashville, Tennessee
Monday, November 4 and Tuesday, November 5
Making a Profit

After your growing season has wound down, join us at this beautiful event center in Nashville, Tennessee. We'll have speaker sessions all day Monday, and feature a presentation on dried flower design Tuesday morning. You won't want to miss this one.

From the DIRECTOR

Learn from the Experts

Judy M. Laushman

From the cover photo to the Regional Reports, elements in this issue of the *Quarterly* perfectly illustrate what growing specialty cut flowers is all about. It's hard to get more "specialty" than cut water lilies—harvested from a kayak, no less.

A grower and a florist who have such a special connection that they call or text several times a week, if not more, make an example of a relationship that many members may wish to emulate. Dealing with yet another disease issue, this time boxwood blight, is a constant that growers are probably not so happy to have in common. We're all lucky that Stanton Gill continues to update and inform us on pests and pathologies.

All readers should check out the Industry Predictions for 2019 on page 30, and look ahead to adapting to shifting consumer purchasing trends, as well as the ever-evolving transition to more ecommerce. How will your marketing plans change this year and beyond? Val Schirmer's analysis of Debra Prinzing's "Tracking Floral Futures" helps to make sense of the range of options available.

Taking Carolyn Snell's advice, this is the time to decide which crops are keepers, and which may be on the cull list. It's sometimes hard to stop production of familiar varieties, but calculating their true profit is a good idea.

These concepts and many others can be learned from other growers participating in the ASCFG Mentor Program. We are accepting applications for Mentors for the 2020-2021 cycle. Please contact me at mail@ascfg.org

This year's four Grower Meetings, in Denver, St. Louis, Portland (Maine), and Nashville are guaranteed to connect you with some of the brightest and most generous cut flower growers in the country and Canada. Make attending at least one of them your simplest goal.

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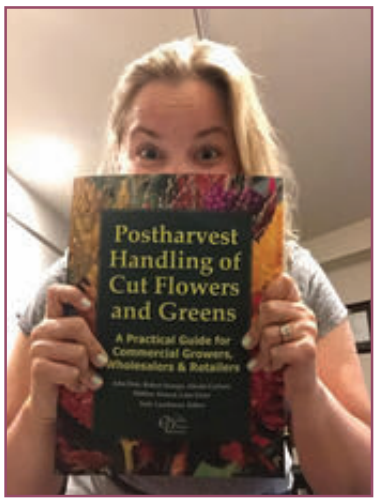

Order at www.ascfg.org or call (440) 774-2887!

Where Will the ASCFG Be in 2019?

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers

Focus on the
Business of Cut Flowers
February 18-19
Denver, Colorado

Urban Farming
(maximum 75 attendees)
March 23
St. Louis, Missouri

In the Thick of It
(maximum 100 attendees)
July 14-15
Portland, Maine

Make a Profit
SELLING Cut Flowers
November 4-5
Nashville, Tennessee

Go to www.ascfg.org for more information.

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